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Prabuddha Bharata

OR

AWAKENED INDIA



**By Karma, Jnana, Bhakti, and Yoga, by one or more or
all of these the vision of the Paramatman is obtained.**

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PRABUDDHA BHARATA

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Vol. LXXIII

MARCH 1968

No. 3



उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत

Arise ! Awake ! And stop not till the Goal is reached.



LETTERS OF SWAMI SHIVANANDA

(139)

Sri Hatiramji Math
Ootacamund, Madras
13 June 1926

Dear Sriman —,

We arrived here on the 4th of June last. Madras proved to be too hot. The work there having been finished somehow according to the will of the Master, I have come over here. The rest can be done from here itself. This is a cool and beautiful hill. The place, which is the summer resort of the Government of Madras, has an altitude of about 8000 ft. and is full of trees and creepers. The residence we have got, is the house of the Mahant of Tirupati or Balaji or Venkateswara, the great holy shrine of the South. Tirupati possesses vast amount of wealth and the Mahant has his summer residence here. He did not visit the place this year. By Master's will, he has allowed us to stay in his house for some days. The well-furnished house with its surrounding flower gardens, spacious courtyard and various kinds of trees most of which are eucalyptus, is beautiful. The climate of the place is quite salubrious. All are keeping well. But, then, mine is an aging body pursued by ailment of this sort or that, especially by cold and some rheumatism which are always there. However, by Master's grace, they do not give much trouble to me.

You will be glad to learn that here, too, a small Math for the Master is being built up and the work is nearing finish. I laid its foundation when I

visited the place last time. Wonder of all, by the Master's will, one washer-man, belonging to the untouchable caste, donated two acres of land for the purpose. In his dream, he had the vision of his chosen deity, Divine Mother, Śītālā, telling him, 'Some men will approach you for a little land for the purpose of building a Math. Give it to them, when they ask for it'. Experiencing the same dream for two to three days he wondered, 'What is it all! Nobody is approaching me for land!' One day, when the local devotees along with those of Madras were in search of some land for their proposed Math, they happened to meet this washer-man devotee. The washer-man devotee asked, 'What are you searching about?' To this they said, 'We are in the look out of a little land where we can build our Math.' The moment the washer-man devotee heard this, he spoke out, 'For all these days I am here searching for you. Please come along and just have two acres of land from out of my total thirty-two acres which I possess.' Forthwith, he executed a registered deed of transfer for it. Wonderful is the dispensation of the Master! None of us can comprehend anything of it. Blessed is He! Blessed is the Incarnation of God, who is born to re-establish the religion of this Age! Blessed is He who is the doer of good to the people, who is the ocean of compassion and who showers his unqualified grace on all!

What to write you more? My heart-felt love and blessings to you as well as to all the members of your family. How is Anadi? I am anxious to know about him. May Master make him free from his ailment. He is a very good boy. The rainy season here is severe. Of all the places of South, it gets the highest rainfall like that of Cherrapunji hills in Bengal [Assam]. That rainy season, too, is not far to come. It is however said that the climate of the place turns out to be much healthful that time.

Your well-wisher,
Shivananda

'Every new religious wave requires a new centre. The old religion can only be revived by a new centre. Hang your dogmas or doctrines, they never pay. It is a character, a life, a centre, a God-man that must lead the way, that must be the centre round which all other elements will gather themselves and then fall like a tidal wave upon the society, carrying all before it, washing away all impurities. . . . That centre, that God-man to lead was born in India. He was the great Ramakrishna Paramahansa, and round him this band is slowly gathering. They will do the work.'

LOVE OF GOD AND KNOWLEDGE OF THE SELF

[EDITORIAL]

The Power of Self-Knowledge and the glory of Divine Love : The knower of God becomes merged in God, whatever path he may follow or whichever discipline he may practise. This union with God is the goal of all religions and end of all Yoga disciplines. Yet each path has its promises and charms, which are wonderful in experience and unique in transcendence. Each path opens up vistas of realizations that are essentially its own. Looked at from this context, love of God and knowledge of the Self make themselves two distinct paths which though converge together in the end, stretch out with different and, at times, divergent expressions and promptings at the beginning. Yet both love and knowledge are independent paths and both equally reveal the same Supreme Reality in all its centrifugal projections and centripetal withdrawnness, sweetness and fierceness, sublime simplicity and rich suggestiveness.

God, viewed through the path of knowledge, appears as all-pervading Brahman, which is Pure Being-Consciousness-Bliss, undivided and undiversified, divested of all differences and dualities including the distinctions of the knower and the known. One knows Him here as the Self of the self, Light of the lights and Truth of all truths, the 'One' that can only be indicated by such terms as 'not this', 'not this'. Hence is the question : 'What is that on knowing which all this becomes known?' (*Mundaka*, I. i. 3) The individual soul, by virtue of strong renunciation and discrimination, tears off the veil of illusion and bondage, knows this Self and becomes one with It.

God, in the path of love, is a Personal God, a separate being and the individual

soul is a separate thing. 'Love comes between, and man begins to approach God, and God, as it were, begins to approach man. Man takes up all the various relationships of life, as father, mother, friend, or lover; and the last point is reached when he becomes one with the object of worship... He expands into one mass of universal love, infinite love—the love that is God.' His whole soul becomes transformed, as it were, into love. All his desires and selfishness become changed into love and he finds that love, lover and Beloved God were one. (*The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*, Vol. II. pp. 51-53).

Both Love and Knowledge emphasize renunciation and discrimination but in different ways. The seeker of the Self knows that all knowledge is in the soul and not in the nature. So he has to stand on his own rational conviction and shake off all bondage by sheer force. To him, the whole nature is a 'framework of illusion', which is false, extraneous, superimposed and hence a bondage that needs breaking. The renunciation for the lover of God necessitates no killing, no breaking of anything. In this renunciation there is no harshness, no dryness, no repression, nor suppression. To all his passions and emotions he only gives a spiritual turn and directs them towards God. The alchemy of love brings in a new transformation into his whole being. He now becomes passionate for God. He accepts this world of illusion as the manifestation of his same Beloved God. The world, for him, is thus a 'mansion of mirth'.

Sri Ramakrishna describes the question, while he instructs a Brahmo devotee by way of conversation :

Brahmo : 'We have passions like anger

and lust. What shall we do with these ?

Sri Ramakrishna : 'Direct the six passions to God. The impulse of *lust* should be turned into the desire to have intercourse with Ātman. Feel *angry* at those who stand in the way of your God. Feel *greedy* for Him. If you must have the feeling of *I and mine*, then associate it with God. Say, for instance, "My Rāma, my Kṛṣṇa." If you must have *pride*, then feel like Bibhīṣaṇa, who said, "I have touched the feet of Rāma with my head ; I will not bow this head before any one else." ' (*The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*, p. 220) The zeal of the lover of God has been compared to a tiger :

'As the tiger devours other animals, so does the "tiger of zeal for the Lord" eat up lust, anger, and the other passions.' (ibid., p. 206)

Knowledge and love thus promise two different realizations of God to the aspirant. One is transcendental and the other is dynamic. Knowledge is power in self-alienation ; Love is power in self-integration. To the knower of the Self, the world is a multitude and a mob of elements, that hustles its votary while he lives and will push him till he dies. It is a cage, which the soul, like a bird, must escape from to soar and sing. The path he treads may be a difficult one but it is the path of universal appeal, for it advocates no doctrine, no dogma, no pilgrimage, no ritual. His is a living God who is impersonal, who pervades all beings high or low and for whom this human body is the greatest of all temples. The advocates of the path of knowledge emphasize spiritual transcendence in place of spiritual flowering. A Personal God, endowed with power and bliss, is adjudged by them as a concession to human ignorance. To justify the merit of this view they fall back upon the texts of the Upaniṣads which speak

of the superior and inferior Brahman.

(*Muṇḍaka*, III. i. 5 and *Kaṭha*, I. iii. 12) The idea of the Personal God, whatever might be its charm and power, is more seeming than real. It does not acquaint one with the reality of that supreme transcendence on which the *Upaniṣad* always asks us to fix our gaze leaving behind the joys of all musings and mutations, cosmic or psychic. (*Kauṣītaki*, II. 4) So the knower of the Self has quite logically been described as 'the foremost of the knowers of Brahman'. For, the *Upaniṣad* says : 'Delighted in the Self, ever devoted to the Self, and steadily active he is the foremost of the knowers of Brahman.' (*Muṇḍaka*, III. i. 4)

The lover of God, on the other hand, looks upon the impersonality of God as a husk, a negation, a void. Who can live on a denial and breathe in a vacuum ? To be personal is to be positive, to draw and sustain. So he says, 'If there be God, it is pleasant to die ; if none, it is not pleasant to live.' His God is not merely a figure of speech. He is also the speech itself. The lovers of God assert that if we are anything, it is the image that we are made in, and have no name but God. 'What do you know ?'—once enquired Socrates. The lovers of God also do not want to know God ; they want to have a taste of Him. They say, 'It is well to speculate about prayer, but how much better it is to pray !' It is this love of God that actuated those humble Buddhists, meek Hindus, and lowly Christians of old to make them stretch out their hands in prayers and hymns. The earth is but a receiving tomb, if those martyrs in some extremity have groaned out their spirits ignorant of Him by whom they were consoled and for whose cause they dedicated their lives ! Therefore the sage Nārada quite appropriately says : '*Bhakti* or love of God is

greater than *karma* or dedicated work, greater than *jñāna* or Self-Knowledge, greater than *yoga* (*Rāja-yoga*), because *Bhakti* itself is its own result, because *Bhakti* is both the means and the end.' (*Nārada-Bhakti-Sūtras*, 25, 26)

Knowledge makes the aspirant silent; love makes him satisfied. One is ever uncompromizing in its pursuits and relentless in its endeavour to free the soul from the fetters of the instincts and inconsistencies of life, whereas the other is unceasing in its urge to transfigure the entire life, root and branch. If one is majestic in its splendour and luminous in its transcendence, the other is rich in its impress, beautiful in its expression and potent in charm. The knower of the Self sees:

'Resting is He and yet restless
Afar is He and yet so near!
He is within all,
And yet yonder outside of all.'
(*Īśā*, 4-5)

But the lover of God sings:

'What need is there of penance if God
is worshipped with love?
What is the use of penance if God
is not worshipped with love?
What need is there of penance if God
is seen within and without?
What is the use of penance if God
is not seen within and without?'
(*Nārada-Pañcarātra*)

The knower of the Self reasons:

'This Self cannot be cut, nor burnt, nor wetted, nor dried. Changeless, all-pervading, unmoving, immovable, the Self is eternal.' (*Bhagavad-Gītā*, II. 24)

The lover of God has a different attitude. Like Fenelon, he believes, 'It is only pure love that loves to suffer.' Like Job, he says:

'Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him.'

Where Self-knowledge and Divine Love converge together: What is most interest-

ing is that, notwithstanding the divergences of outlook and ideal, both the knower of the Self and the lover of God attain the same unitive realization. At the summit of their realizations the knowledge of the knower of Self and the love of the lover of God become one integral illumination which defies all distinctions of paths and creeds. Both become knowers of that same Infinite One which can never be defined or described in any way.

Divine love, according to sage Nārada, is 'intense love for God', the essential characteristics of which are 'the consecration of all activities, by complete self-surrender, and extreme anguish if He were to be forgotten'. The sage Vyāsa looks upon it as 'devotion to worship and the like' and the sage Garga describes it as 'devotion to sacred talk and the like'. (*Nārada-Bhakti-Sūtras*, 2, 16, 17 & 19) The sage Kaśyapa declares that for obtaining liberation, one should meditate on the glory of God, whereas the sage Bādarāyaṇa says that the mind should be directed to the Self, distinction between the self and Self being a mere illusion. Synthesizing the different views the sage Śaṇḍilya holds that it should be directed towards both self and Self. By this Śaṇḍilya reminds us of the major Upaniṣadic text 'Thou art That' and indicates that one is to direct one's mind both towards 'Thou' and 'That'. (*Śaṇḍilya-Sūtras*, 29-31) Nārada too, while speaking about the ecstatic love of the Gopīs, says that their love of God was not without the knowledge of the God-nature which is but the knowledge of the Self. For, devoid of that knowledge their love would have been blind and they would have committed the sin of unchastity. (cf. *Nārada-Bhakti-Sūtras*, 22-23) The *Bhāgavata* (VII. 17) describes the knower of the Self as *ekabhakti* or one who is devoted to a single entity. That Self-Knowledge and

ecstatic love are one and the same has again and again been indicated in different texts. (ibid., VII. 14, 19, 29; IX. 13; X. 10, 11; XI. 54; XIV. 26; XV. 19; and XVIII. 54)

On the other hand, one can refer to a large number of other texts of the scriptures which indicate that Self can be realized only through divine grace. The *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* (I. ii. 23) says: 'It is attained by him alone whom God chooses'. 'Liked by Him, he attains immortality.' (*Śvetāśvatara*, I. 6) Yājñavalkya reminds Maitreyī that every one and everything in this world is loved only for the sake of Ātman or Bliss in the form of Brahman. (*Bṛhadāraṇyaka*, II. 4)

In the *Vivekacūḍāmaṇi* (31) Śaṅkara says:

'Among things conducive to liberation, devotion (*Bhakti*) alone holds the supreme place. The seeking after one's real nature is designated as devotion.'

Again, in *Śivānandalaharī* he writes:

'Let me born as a man or God, an animal or a tree, a gnat, a worm, or a bird. If my heart is immersed in the love of Thy blessed lotus feet, what do I care for any kind of body?'

Thus in the heights of supreme realization both love and knowledge lose all their dualistic marks of distinction. They make one single lucent illumination in which knowledge becomes the lamp of love and love becomes the oil of the lamp. As Materlinck said, 'Love sinking deeper, grows wiser; and wisdom that springs up aloft comes ever the nearer to love.' This comingling of the personal and impersonal aspects of God has been the refrain of all the forms of God-realizations. Saint Gorakhnath once asked the Vedāntic saint Kabīr,

'Kabīr, kabas bhaye bairāgi—

'Tell me O Kabīr, when did your vocation begin? When did your love have its rise?'

To this Kabīr replied:

'When He whose manifold forms had not begun to play, when the world was not manifested, when the Supreme One was one alone, then O Gorakh, I became an ascetic and my love was drawn to Brahman.'

'Daryākī lahar dariyāo hai jee i.e. The river and its waves are but one surf; where is the difference between the river and its waves? Because it is named as wave, shall it no longer be considered as water?'

In the state of supreme illumination, one no longer seeks God but sees Him. One sees Him both inside and outside, both with form and formless. Once a devotee asked Sri Ramakrishna:

'Sir, has God forms or has He not? And if both, how can two such contradictory natures be in Him at the same time?'

To this Sri Ramakrishna replied:

'He is both with and without form—like water and ice.' Similarly, it may be told that supreme illumination is both love of God and knowledge of the Self at the same time. The illumined one is both steady in wisdom or a *sthītaprajña* and a lover of God or one who is steadfast with the love for God.

Both the lover of God and the knower of the Self fail to describe what they experience at the summit of their respective realizations. The sage Nārada says, 'Inexpressible is the nature of love.' It is 'like the taste of a dumb man'. (*Bhakti-Sūtras*, 51-52) The sage Yājñavalkya, too, tells his wife Maitreyī and asks:

'Through what should one know that because of which all this is known, through what, O Maitreyī, should one know the Knower?' (*Bṛhadāraṇyaka*, II. iv. 12, 14; IV. v. 13, 15) Plotinus describes this state of supreme realization as 'In our Self-seeing There', where 'the man is changed, no longer himself, nor self-belonging; he

is merged with the Supreme, sunken into it, one with it, centre coincides with centre, for in this higher plane things that touch at all are one... This is why the vision baffles telling...' (*The Ethical Treatises*).

Self-realization changes a man truly indeed! 'Ecstatic love' as Nārada says, makes him 'perfect', 'free from grief' and 'satisfied'. He no longer desires anything or 'delights in sensuous objects'. No more he makes 'effort for selfish ends', for he has tasted the 'Supreme Bliss' which makes one immortal. (*Bhakti-Sūtras*, 4, 5, 59) So does he become immortal by attaining the knowledge of the Self, which makes him steady in wisdom. He is no more shaken by adversity; he no longer hankers after happiness. Satisfied in the Self by the Self, he becomes free from pairs of the opposites and the sense of 'I' and 'mine'. He conquers death and forthwith becomes liberated though living in this body, because he has realized that having obtained which one regards no other acquisition superior to it. (*Bhagavad-Gītā*)

How do these immortal souls sit and walk? What is the way they behave on earth? The man of realization, say the scriptures, becomes a God-intoxicated person. Ecstatic love, according to Nārada, is a thing by knowing which one becomes intoxicated with the love of God. (*Bhakti-Sūtras*, 6) In *Vivekacūḍāmaṇi* (540, 542) Śaṅkara describes the ways the God-intoxicated persons behave:

'Established in the ethereal plane of Absolute Knowledge, he wanders in the world, sometimes like a madman, sometimes like a child and at other times like a ghoul, having no other clothes on his person except the quarters or sometimes wearing clothes, or perhaps skins at other times... Sometimes a fool, sometimes a sage, sometimes possessed of regal splendour; sometimes wandering, sometimes behaving like a motionless python, some-

times wearing a benignant expression; sometimes honoured, sometimes insulted, sometimes unknown;—thus lives the man of realization, ever happy with Supreme Bliss.'

Such God-intoxicated persons decisively demonstrate the truth about God. Truly they see One in many, Unity in the midst of all the diversities. A Gopī whose mind is given to Kṛṣṇa places her arm on another Gopī and says, 'See, I am Kṛṣṇa.' (*Bhāgavata*).

The sage Jaḍa Bharta was one such God-intoxicated person who, though a great knower of the Self, always used to behave like a dumb and foolish person. One day, while he was sitting under a tree in a state of supreme God-intoxication, the king of the country was passing by that way in a palanquin carried on the shoulders of the bearers. 'One of the bearers had unexpectedly fallen ill, and so his attendants were looking about for a man to replace him. Seeing that he [the sage Jaḍa Bharata] was so able-bodied, the king's servants caught hold of him and placed the pole on his shoulders. Without speaking a word, Bharata went on. Very soon after this, the king remarked that the palanquin was not being evenly carried and looking out of the palanquin addressed the new bearer, saying "Fool, rest a while; if thy shoulders pain thee, rest a while." Then Bharata laying the pole of the palanquin down, opened his lips for the first time in his life, and spoke, "Whom dost thou, O King, call a fool? Who dost thou say is weary? Whom dost thou address as 'thou'?...Dost thou mean, O King, that the Self can ever be weary, that It can ever be tired, that It can ever be hurt? I did not want, O King—this body did not want—to trample upon the poor worms crawling on the road, and therefore, in trying to avoid them, the palanquin moved unevenly. But the Self was

never tired; It was never weak; It never bore the pole of the palanquin: for It is omnipotent and omnipresent." The king who was proud of his learning, knowledge, and philosophy, alighted from the palanquin and fell at the feet of Bharata, saying, "I ask thy pardon O mighty one, I did not know that thou wast a sage, when I asked thee to carry me". Bharata blessed him and departed.' (*The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*, Vol. IV, pp. 113-14)

In *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna* (p. 491) one finds the mention of a God-intoxicated saint in the garb of a ghoulish about whom Sri Ramakrishna himself describes:

'A few days after the dedication of the temple at Dakshineswar, a mad man came there who was really a sage endowed with the Knowledge of Brahman. He had a bamboo twig in one hand and a potted mango-plant in the other, and was wearing torn shoes. He didn't follow any social conventions. . After bathing in the Ganges he didn't perform any religious rites. He ate something that he carried in a corner of his wearing-cloth. Then he entered the Kālī temple and chanted hymns to the Deity. The temple trembled. Haladhari was then in the shrine. The mad man wasn't allowed to eat at the guest-house, but he paid no attention to this slight. He searched for the food in the rubbish heap where the dogs were eating crumbs from the discarded leaf-plates. Now and then he pushed the dogs aside to get his crumbs. The dogs didn't mind either. Haladhari followed him and asked: "Who are you? Are you a

pūrṇajñānī?" The madman whispered, "Sh! Yes, I am a *pūrṇajñānī*." My heart began to palpitate as Haladhari told me about it. I clung to Hriday. I said to the Divine Mother, "Mother, shall I too have to pass through such a state?" We all went to see the man. He spoke words of great wisdom to us but behaved like a mad man before others. Haladhari followed him a great way when he left the garden. After passing the gate he said to Haladhari: "What else shall I say to you? When you no longer make any distinction between the water of this pool and the water of the Ganges, then you will know that you have Perfect Knowledge." Saying this he walked rapidly away.'

All paths lead to God: Infinite is the nature of God and numerous are the paths that lead to Him. And these paths have come into being quite in keeping with the different tendencies and temperaments of the devotees of God. Love and Knowledge, if they are different, are different only as paths which end in same one God in whom all contradictions rest in perfect harmony and peace. It is therefore immaterial to speculate over the paths and their differences. It will be dogmatic to differentiate Love of God from the Knowledge of the Self and to set a limit to the modes of Self-realization. To realize God is the end of human life; and one can reach Him by any method or through any means whatsoever. So Saint Paul says: '*optimum esse unire des*—the best is to be one with God.' The sage Nārada, too, advises the king Yudhiṣṭhira and says:

'By any method whatsoever one should fix one's mind on God.'



SOME VITAL QUESTIONS ANSWERED

SWAMI MADHAVANANDA

[We reproduce below the text of a conversation that took place on November 25, 1961, between Srimat Swami Madhavanandaji Maharaj, who later became the ninth President of the Ramakrishna Order and the devotees of the Vedanta Society of New York, U.S.A. The conversation was arranged at the house of a devotee at which several members of the Vedanta Society were present. The present text has come to us through the courtesy of Mrs. Courtenaya Olden, New York, U.S.A.—Ed.]

What is the difference between the *samskāras* of an ordinary man and the man of realization?

The man of realization has his *samskāras* under control, but the ordinary man has not. These *samskāras*, or impressions, cause the ordinary man to behave in a certain way, sometimes good; sometimes bad. But the bad also is a path to Him. Even if one becomes sunk in degradation, he will rise again. When the wheel (of a vehicle) goes down to the pavement, it cannot go lower; it turns and goes up.

In Hinduism also we have the idea of reincarnation. To say that we have one life and eternal damnation afterwards is absurd. We are in a series. This life is just one link in a chain. According to our *samskāras* we take another birth—human or animal. Animal birth is an advantage in the case of a person who has bestial tendencies. Instead of being born as a human and acting against society and fighting with the police, one can get rid of these tendencies without inhibitions and get through with these things so much faster. It is a great advantage. In *The Eternal Companion*, Swami Brahmananda says: 'When you feel and know that you are helpless, that you have no other refuge but God, and nothing to look forward to, then only does devotion to God arise.' Why

does this seem such a dismal picture to us?

A. For some it comes that way. Others attain devotion to God in different ways.

Q. Can God be realized in this very life; even under our circumstances?

A. Yes. (pause) Why only under your circumstances? Even under the *worst* possible circumstances, God can be realized through His grace.

The fact that we are here is due to the grace of the Lord; that we have some longing, that we feel like meditating at all, is due to His grace. *Everything* is due to His grace, otherwise why this difference between one man and another? Why should a handful of people long for Him and the majority of people do not care to even think of these things?

As long as we are deluded by the things of this world, He lets us have them, but when we have seen the worthlessness of these things, then we will not bother about them any more. In any case, the very enjoyment of these things will lead to Him. It is in the very nature of the world that enjoyments cannot bring happiness; there *will* come a reaction—the world is set up that way.

Through *bhoga* to God is the usual way to Him. We cannot jump directly to God; a few extraordinary persons can do that, but most people have to

go through the world first. Keep on praying to God; pestering Him until He has to come to you.

Q. On the subject of offering one's work to God, I can see how a person, who does something concrete like making a pair of shoes, can offer this to the Lord, but how can purely mental work be offered?

A. When the work is finished, just offer it to the Lord.

Q. But Swami, this remembrance, this offering, is perhaps one second after maybe half an hour of work.

A. This is better than nothing. The Lord is more pleased with a little remembrance from someone who has a lot to do than more remembrance from one who has a great deal of time. Put all those seconds together and you have something really important. Just as ten seconds of sleep when one loses awareness of the world around us refreshes us so much, so these momentary remembrances of God will benefit us. Through such practice, the time will come when we will be able to remember Him more and more.

Q. It seems that God has already given us more than we deserve.

A. Yes, and now tell Him, 'You have done so much; you have brought me this far; now do the rest.'

Q. How can we see God in everyone?

A. Try to see Him in *some* persons first; a few highly evolved souls. In a ruffian it is difficult to see Him; only a man of God can see Him in everyone, but we can start by seeing Him in a few persons.

The Swami spoke of meeting M [Mahendranath Gupta, one of Sri Ramakrishna's foremost householder disciples and the recorder of *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*] in his youth; of M's great devotion to Sri Ramakrishna and His

ideals, of how he counselled the young men in the same manner in which Sri Ramakrishna taught. For instance, M told them not to marry for ten years. He did not forbid them to marry—just said to wait for ten years. 'Sri Ramakrishna never forbade people to do things. He never even told Girish Ghosh to give up his bottle.'

The Swami also mentioned M's reverence for monks, even the young ones. Example: One day M had been walking with Swami Vishuddhananda, the eighth President of the Ramakrishna Order, who was then a young *brahmacārin*. After Swami Vishuddhananda had left M and walked some distance, he happened to turn around and he saw M taking the dust of the ground from the place where the Swami had stood, and placing it on his head with great reverence.

Q. We know that M spent most of his later years speaking of Sri Ramakrishna's life and message, but did he make any disciples?

A. No. Only one among Sri Ramakrishna's householder disciples made disciples—Ramchandra Dutta. There were five householder disciples to whom Sri Ramakrishna gave the commission to spread His message: Ramchandra Dutta, Girish Ghosh, Kedar, Vijoy, and M. They used their power differently. Girish spread Sri Ramakrishna's message through his plays. So much spirituality he put into them!

Members of the Brahmo Samaj don't offer to the Lord His own flowers because they are His already, but they offer mental worship. When this was mentioned in the presence of Sri Ramakrishna, he said, 'Is your mind your own? Does not that also belong to Him?' After all, we worship the Gaṅgā with Gaṅgā water.

Q. When we read *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*, *The Eternal Com-*

panion, and other books, it seems so easy to realize God.

A. Yes, Sri Ramakrishna has made it so easy. He has reduced everything to one requirement—sincerity. If we are sincere, He will make everything easy—the main thing is sincerity.

Q. Among the problems a spiritual aspirant faces is how to overcome the

tendency to criticize others. We know this is a dangerous fault; Holy Mother spoke against it with almost Her last breath, and yet it is difficult to overcome.

A. Criticism comes from egotism; one feels holier than thou; but if we think on Holy Mother's words, if we keep our minds on these high things, ultimately the mind is changed.

FAITH IN YOURSELF AND FAITH IN GOD

SWAMI PAVITRANANDA

I remember that in our school-days, in a short history book we read about a Hindu king in Bengal, in the twelfth century, whose name was Lakṣman Sen. His kingdom was invaded by a Moham-medan general. Lakṣman Sen consulted an astrologer and the astrologer said, 'In the battle that is coming, you will be the loser.' Lakṣman Sen left the palace and fled, and the Mohammedan invader got the kingdom with only seventeen soldiers. It is true that the prediction of the astrologer proved correct; but Lakṣman Sen left a blot on his name in history. The historians are, however, divided in their opinion as to the exact nature of the fact. Some of them posit that it was not so. In any case, it shows the tendency to believe anything we hear from supposedly authentic sources.

But such things do happen. When your morale is broken you give way very easily. This is one of the tactics in modern warfare; propaganda is used to break down the morale of the enemy troops. False reports are circulated—so many soldiers have died on that side, and so many casualties of other kinds. And other unethical

things are said and done. It is a war of nerves, just to break the spirit of the enemy troops. These are tactics, but these tactics are applied deliberately in warfare, whereas we unknowingly become victims of such attitudes. Many persons fail, because for one reason or another their self-confidence was shattered. The reason might have been poverty, it might have been an unhappy home, it might have been due to living in very dominant company. In any event, many cases happen thus, because for one reason or another the individual lost faith in himself. That is the greatest calamity that can happen to anyone, but unfortunately that calamity is common. Very few have self-confidence and can sustain it in the face of difficulties.

If this is true of ordinary affairs, it is much more true of spiritual life. It is extremely important in spiritual life that one should have confidence; confidence in one's possibilities, confidence in one's latent powers. This is more important, I say, because in spiritual life you strive for the highest ideal. In worldly life, you strive for this or that thing, this or that success; but in spiritual life you want to lift up

your whole life. You want to wipe out your past and build up your future, extending beyond your death, and this is the highest aspiration man can have. Naturally, it is a prolonged struggle; naturally you will have to face many difficulties, real or fancied. Many times there will come whispers of darkness—you are not fit for that, you have taken to a wrong path, it was impudent on your part to have that high aspiration. The whispers of the devil, as they say, will come, and we have to resist these things—whispers from within, whispers from environment and circumstances. Your best friends will say that you are on a wild-goose chase. These may be persons who are successful in worldly life, but what do they know of spiritual life? They have not gone that way. Yet you have confidence in them, in their sanity, their wisdom, and so on. You have to protect yourself against all these things. Therefore, you must have faith in yourself first. I deliberately chose the title, 'Faith in Yourself and Faith in God.' And it is true. It is realism. Faith in yourself is the first thing; otherwise you cannot have faith in God. If millions of Gods are ready to help you, still you cannot take advantage of their help because you do not have that aspiration, you have no faith in yourself. Even if you are told these things, you cannot believe in them; you cannot stand erect, your faith is gone. Unfortunately, this attitude of 'man is nothing' as far as spirituality is concerned, is in the air. Dualistic religions invariably will say that you are nothing, you are zero, you are weak; so much so that it has gone into your blood vessels, as it were. It has become part of your life that you are nothing, you are weak, you cannot do anything, you are powerless. Not only do they say this, but also they say that you are a sinner in danger of hell and damnation. God will punish you, that God, who

is like the justice of a criminal court, has been taking down notes of all our failings and weaknesses. No wonder that we live in fear. It is said, 'We are born in fear, we live in fear, and we see nothing but fear in the future,' as far as life is concerned.

But do we say that man is not weak, that man does not come into contact with circumstances with which his powers are not sufficient to cope? We do not deny that either. We do find, every moment, that we cannot do what we want. I do not deny that there is weakness in man; but the fact is that it is apparent. It is not the reality. It is on the surface. It is a mistaken notion. But though it is a mistaken notion, so long as we do not know that it is a mistake we suffer; man suffers from weakness. Man thinks that to err is human and takes it for granted that man will err. And so we compromise with ourselves and we compromise with the weaknesses of others. We cannot believe that man can transcend his limitations, all the limitations of weaknesses and failings.

All these things are apparent. What is the reality? The reality is that man is divine; man is the Soul; man is the Self, the eternal Self. But because of our ignorance, we feel that we are this body. The body is bound to decay. From the time one is born, death is approaching. The body grows; but there are seeds of destruction in it. The body is changing all the while; but though the body changes, one does not change. There is something within, which remains the same. In infancy, in youth, in old age, even when one dies, there is something within, which does not change. One says that one feels one is dying. One is separate from one's body, one feels. So is also with the mind. Mind is changing, mind is not eternal existence. Mind is constantly changing. We know to our great anguish that we can-

not depend on our minds; that is, ordinary people cannot depend on their minds. If we see the unreliability of our minds, naturally we feel weak. But that is not our real nature. Dualistic religion emphasizes these things, but not those persons who have attained realization through dualistic religion. They know what is the real thing; they simply talk in terms of popular belief and experience.

We experience our bodily changes—that we are weak, are suffering. But what about the Self which is within us? The Self is undying, the Self is the repository of all knowledge, is all Knowledge Itself. Even dualistic religion says that. Christ talked of eternal life. Christ talked of the peace that passeth understanding. Christ talked of your being the sons, the children of God. All dualistic religions will say that—you are children of God, you are parts of God. Some will say that you are separate from God, but nevertheless there is a relationship. You are children of God. There is the philosophical dilemma: if you are not material, if you are infinite or spiritual, (in spiritual things there is no dimension), there cannot be manifoldness. Manifoldness is in material things. This is a problem which the dualists cannot solve with their ideas that man is separate from God. But ordinary persons cannot rise to any higher level. They think that there is God, and they are separate from Him but are nevertheless His children. If you are a child of God, then you cannot be a sinner, you cannot be really weak. You cannot be frightened even by your mind, because mind is your slave; you are the Self and mind is a superimposition. You are the ruler of your being. So, even from the dualistic standpoint, there is a source of strength, but that is not emphasized. We emphasize the position which we see from our ignorance. Even Buddha said, 'The cause of creation is ignorance, *ajñāna*.'

But if it is ignorance, ignorance can go only when light is brought in. Ignorance is a negative thing. Ignorance indicates that there is something positive, something of the nature of knowledge. Even when we say that we are ignorant, that means we have a faint idea that there is some knowledge somewhere. So these fears and ideas of limitation come out of ignorance. As the monistic religions or philosophies say, all these things are the outcome of ignorance, they are unreal; the real thing is that you are divine.

That is very, very rational, highly philosophical; it cannot be disputed. Man is one with the Infinite, is one with Infinite Knowledge and Infinite Bliss. Swami Vivekananda said, 'My ideal can be put in a few words; that is, to preach unto mankind their divinity, and how to manifest that in every movement of life. The real nature of man is divine.' In other words, not to err is human; for man is divine, is incapable of erring. That is his real nature, that indicates that the possibility is there, that it is latent, dormant in us. That is our real nature. When you say that you are weak, it is something like seeing a ghost in the dark, mistaking a stump of a tree for a ghost. It comes out of illusion, out of our false understanding. The Reality is divine. If that be so, we can realize That. It is our real nature. It does not have to be grown. It is not simply a potentiality, for potentiality means that it will come, will blossom forth as a full-grown flower. It does not have to grow in that way; it is there in completeness; it is our real Self. And if we think in terms of our Reality, if we do not think in terms of our ignorance, then we have faith. We cannot lose our confidence. Even before we realize the Highest, if we think rationally and try to live up to that conclusion, we cannot lose faith in ourself. To judge rationally, it is a mis-

nomer, it is an illusion to think that we are weak. If we believe in reason, then let us try to live up to our reason. Dualistic religions will say that man as he is, is a fall from a spiritual state. Then, if man has fallen from a spiritual state, and the spiritual state is permanent and eternal, it is up to all of us to rise to that state. At least, we can think in terms of that state. With that outlook, we shall find the eternal Source of strength. If we have a glimpse, or an understanding of that real state, then we should try to think in terms of that which is knowledge, which is life.

To reach that state, it is necessary also to have our intellectual understanding so clear that we can correct ourselves when we feel diffident or defeated, for the real source of strength is ever present within us. That correcting ourselves means faith in ourselves. It is a part of the game of creation that we have to correct ourselves; we have to make an effort. Unless that effort is made, nothing can be done. And that effort can be made only when we have faith in ourselves, or have a clear understanding of our potentialities or possibilities or realities.

The ordinary method of prayer is not enough. There must come a time when we feel that prayer is a reality, prayer is answered. A great saint said, 'If you do not believe that prayer is answered, how can you live a religious life?' You cannot. There must come some idea in your mind that prayer is answered. I say 'some,' because we cannot have the fullest faith, unless we see again and again that our prayer is answered. Unless that belief comes, even to a certain extent, you cannot begin your spiritual life. Even to begin with, some faith is necessary. And when that faith ripens, when that faith grows, then the faith in God comes. So the beginning comes from you. When you are in

ignorance, you must have a desire to get rid of that ignorance. And when the desire comes, fulfilment is in the offing. The very fact that there is a desire indicates that there will come a time, sooner or later, if you pursue it, when that desire will be fulfilled.

So, men of God say that if you make an attempt and you continue it, you are sure to succeed. Sri Ramakrishna used to say, 'There is a Gas Company in Calcutta. Make an application to the Gas Company, which will make a connexion to your house, and you will find gas ready to use in your room.' If you really believe, or even if you only have a clear understanding that there is a God, a Power, then the idea comes that if you pray to Him, you have the right to expect Him to reveal Himself to you. Here we are talking from the dualistic standpoint, which speaks of the existence of God. If God does exist, and if you are children of God, you have a right to claim your inheritance. That feeling will help you. Christ said, 'The Kingdom of Heaven suffereth violence and the violent take it by force.' Sri Ramakrishna used to say that a child, by mere insistence makes its mother give it what it wants. Faith in oneself means faith that one belongs to God, however far away God seems to be. When we develop such faith, such devotion, we can take the kingdom of heaven by force, as it were—exactly as Christ said.

Sri Ramakrishna was very fond of a song which said, 'All depends on your attitude, all depends on your thoughts, your manner of thinking.' If your thinking is right, you can call out faith from within. Faith is of great importance. Faith here means faith that God will listen to you, that you belong to God. If you always say, 'I am nothing, I am nothing', that becomes a disease. Yes, we are nothing—from the human level, but that

is not our permanent state of being. When faith develops, you can claim your inheritance, you can say, 'Why shall I not be entitled to my inheritance? Why will not God reveal Himself to me?' It depends on one's attitude. The right attitude can be called up from within. When a person who is a devotee of the Divine Mother, or God, gets that right attitude, he gets his liberation and is in a state of bliss. His faith is so intense that he feels, 'I do not care for all these rituals, all these forms of spiritual practice, and so on. I belong to the Divine Mother. That is enough. I do not care for anything else.' You see, it is simply a question of faith in oneself. Faith in oneself leads to faith in God. It starts from the human level.

If one is a monist, it comes more easily as far as intellectual understanding and approach are concerned, though the struggle is not less. A monist will at once begin to see that his real Self is the Divine. He does not pray, he meditates. He tries to live on that conviction, he tries to put his intellectual understanding into practice. He makes his efforts on the basis of his intellectual understanding. Therefore, monism appeals to many modern minds. This is not a question of faith in the ordinary sense. He believes in himself, and he wants to put his belief into practice. He believes in his potentiality and power. By the sheer force of will power he reaches the depths of his being, and realizes his divine nature. That is monism; that is what Buddha preached.

Whatever path you follow, this is the thing: Sri Ramakrishna once said, 'Everyone will have the knowledge of the Self.' This he said to 'M' [Mahendranath Gupta], the author of *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*. 'M' was very devotional, but being unable to rise up to that height, said, 'Yes, but as you say, it depends on the will of the Lord. It will come in the

right time.' Sri Ramakrishna was in a different mood and said, 'No, if one yearns for Him, He will come. It is not a question of God's giving it.' He said, 'If you yearn for Him ... if you are earnest and sincere, He will listen to your prayer.' It is a different kind of attitude. One who has reached that state, has gone beyond the law of Karma where the effect is according to the action. The law of Karma is only a philosophical principle. One person said to Sri Ramakrishna, 'Sir, there is the law of Karma, which we cannot escape.' Sri Ramakrishna replied, 'No, the law of Karma does not touch a devotee, one who has real love for God.' You see the law of Karma only on a certain level. If you go below that level, you come to the deeper reaches of your being, and the law of Karma becomes ineffective. Or, the law of Karma which would be fulfilled, let us say, in hundreds of lives, can be fulfilled in one life, if one is sincere. It is not always a question of will power. It is a question of earnest yearning. Religious life means squeezing many lives into one life. Ordinary persons will wait and wait, going to the lowest depths of degradation and wretchedness. Then, as they say of a deer brought to bay, if you chase a deer; at last in sheer desperation it faces you, and sometimes can be very ferocious. In the same way, man goes down and down. Yet because there is a potentiality, a divine fire within, it manifests itself. Out of the depths of degradation it comes. But religion says that one does not necessarily have to go through the whole gamut of degradation. The realization which would come normally, or in certain cases after many, many lives, one should want to get in this very life, and one can get in this life, depending upon the degree of earnestness. Vedānta Scriptures say, 'When there are many leaves piled one on another, with a needle you can penetrate all of

them simultaneously.' In the same way, all the layers of ignorance within you can be quickly penetrated if you are earnest enough. From that standpoint, dualism has, perhaps, some advantages over monism. You pray to God in your helplessness; you throw the whole burden of responsibility on God, and out of the strength of your conviction in the compassionateness of God you expect that help will come. Lives of saints in the past indicate that help did come in many cases. When you depend on your lower self, you are weak. Man is weak, it is true, but the One on whom we rely is not weak. With man it is impossible, but with God nothing is impossible.

So, for one who follows the path of devotion, when his love for God awakens, helplessness goes away and a different approach opens up. He feels, 'Why should He not come to me? I also can get it in a trice, in a moment.' It is said, if you can pray to God with utter sincerity, in a moment you can get Him. We might think we are sincere, but that is not enough. There are degrees of sincerity. When we consider that we are sincere, we are so, according to our understanding at that level. Afterwards one will find that there are different levels of sincerity. Here also we find, faith in oneself first. The initiative must come from within us; the yearning must come from us. When the yearning comes, it carries with it the conviction of our capability of attaining our goal. The idea of our possibilities and potentialities becomes very firm in our lives at that time. Even in ordinary things, even in worldly life, unless there is such conviction, one does not succeed. Those who succeed have the conviction that they will succeed. Obstacles, or the fear of obstacles, do not bother them.

Recently, I read an article in a magazine about a person who wanted to have his

play staged in some Broadway theatre. I was surprised to read that to have a play staged, would require from \$40,000 to \$700,000—just to open the show. So, this person had written a play, and the script was passing from hand to hand for one or two years. Nobody thought it was fit for staging, but the writer had the conviction that it could be done. He had no money, but some of his friends, seeing his conviction, got together and raised some money. Thus he managed to stage the play. The first night he lost \$4,400. For many performances it was a failure, but on the 136th performance the house was sold out. Afterwards it was a roaring success, and went on to 328 performances. The secret of the ultimate success of this man was that he never got frightened by the enormous obstacles. For the two years in which the script went from hand to hand, his friends called him a fool, but it never occurred to him that he would fail. He saw the possibilities of failure, but the conviction of success was there. So this shows how much can be accomplished if only one believes in what one wants to do. It is amazing. It is not magic. The magic was that he had that conviction, that faith in himself.

If this is so in worldly things, it is much more so in spiritual life. From one standpoint it is so very easy, if only your attitude changes. But how? If the attitude does not change naturally, automatically, what can you do? The important thing is to analyse, judge, think—as we do in ordinary matters. The moment a spirit of diffidence comes in, just dismiss it as a whisper of the devil, as they say. It is not the right thing. We must begin to think in a right way. Set your thinking right. There is no logic in the idea of failure—logic is on your side in spiritual life. The experiences of saints and the truths stated in the scriptures are in your favour. Would

you go by those experiences of the scriptures and the saints, or by your own diffidence? Each time you lose confidence, correct your thinking. Buddha spoke of *smṛti*, which means recollectedness. It is important always to have the recollection of what your goal is and how best to reach that goal, and to be optimistic.

'Failures are the pillars of success.' Every time you forget, just repeat that. Repetition is the condition of memory. If your memory fails about your real nature, just repeat to yourself what you really are. Watch your mind day and night. The moment you forget, just repeat these ideas. By mere repetition and intellectual analysis, you will begin to get strength. Understanding will come.

There are other helps. If you live in an atmosphere of optimism, with those who have a certain amount of conviction in religious life, or a certain amount of success, you will find that you will get inspiration and enthusiasm. It is said that the word 'enthusiasm' comes from the Greek—*en theos*. *En* means in; *theos*, God. Thus, enthusiasm means that God is within you. So, just live with those who have enthusiasm, and try to call it up within you by sheer will, or by repetition. Whenever you feel diffident, think that God is within you.

There are some persons who constantly say, 'I cannot do this, I cannot do that.' It becomes a disease with them which requires treatment. Live with those who are spiritually optimistic. Optimism and

pessimism are simply attitudes of mind. It is said, 'As is your attitude, so is your success.' Buddha said, 'As is your thought, so is your character.' Right thinking is necessary. And if you try in that way, then faith will begin to come. And when it begins to come, it can be intensified, more and more it can be intensified. Yet life will oscillate between hope and fear, faith and lack of faith. Faith comes, and afterwards there comes a cloud. If we wait, the clouds will pass away. In that way life goes on.

However, if your enthusiasm is great, your intensity increases, your faith increases. Even if we begin with a lukewarm faith, and persist in our spiritual efforts, that lukewarm faith becomes an intense faith. But the real faith comes after realization, complete realization. Then there is no fear. There are no more ups and downs. With complete realization, one gets complete faith in God. But complete faith in God also comes as the result of faith in yourself. This is so true. As Swami Vivekananda said, 'If you have no faith in yourself, faith in three hundred million gods and goddesses will not help you.' Begin from within. The real help comes from you. And, as you pursue your goal, you find that the real you, the real me, is God Himself, or the Oneness Itself. We are really divine; all these things, such as fears, diffidence, etc. were simply superimpositions, or the outcome of ignorance. Ignorance is not life; knowledge is life. Knowledge is our real nature.

'The wretch who constantly says, "I am bound, I am bound" only succeeds in being bound. He who says day and night, "I am a sinner, I am a sinner" verily becomes a sinner. One should have such burning faith in God that one can say: "What? I have repeated the name of God, and can sin still cling to me? How can I be a sinner any more? How can I be in bondage any more?"'

The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna, p. 68

MOSES, MAN OF GOD

RABBI ASHER BLOCK

Most moderns hardly know what to make of Moses as 'Man of God'. They will, in their mind's eye, classify him as Liberator and Lawgiver, and they are correct. But this is not the final judgment of the Tradition. The one title, above all others, which has come down ringing through the ages, is that which is found in the peroration of Deuteronomy (33:1) and in the caption of the 90th Psalm: Moses, Man of God.

What is a man of God, and wherein does he differ from ordinary men? Ordinary people live their lives on the physical and mental planes, on the subconscious and conscious levels, and their lives are predominantly earth-bound. A Godly person is he who enters a third domain, that of the Spirit or superconsciousness, and by so doing transforms the other two levels as well. In Moses, as in the exemplars and *avatārs* of other faiths, we have a shining example of what happens when a human being transcends the limitations of this earthly existence, and enters the realm divine.

In my early school days, when I was taught the life of Moses, it was impressed upon me that Moses was a man like other men. See, it was pointed out to me, how simply and naturally the *Torah* presents the story of his birth (Ex. 2: 1, 2): 'A certain man of the house of Levi went and married a Levite woman. The woman conceived and bore a son...' What was totally glossed over in this oversimplified telling was the fact that this verse follows immediately upon the verse: 'Then Pharaoh charged all his people, saying, "Every boy that is born you shall throw into the Nile."' The emergence of Moses, the redeemer, upon a background of harsh

oppression is a miraculous tale indeed. From beginning to end, 'the hand of God' is evident on every page and in every chapter of Moses' life.

Why, then, was my teacher so intent upon *humanizing* the biography of Moses? He made no secret of it. He had two purposes in mind. One was—to contrast the way in which most Jews deal with their central figure and the way in which most Christians deal with theirs. Secondly, he felt convinced that Judaism, unlike most other religions, was a 'this-worldly' religion, fully applicable to the life of the average person. To present Moses in 'supernatural' terms would be to put him out of human reach, and thus defeat the practical aspects of our faith.

Since these two attitudes are fairly common and widespread nowadays, it is well that we should view them briefly before embarking upon the life of Moses as the Bible and classical Jewish tradition actually portray him.

It is quite understandable that many Jews should resist the attempt on the part of those Christians (particularly missionaries) who depict Jesus as the *exclusive* Divine Saviour, evidenced by a miraculous physical birth and death. Having found varying degrees of salvation in their own faith, and through their own Prophets, Jewish devotees simply know this claim to be untrue. Moreover, they have suffered much because of this doctrine. So in order to avoid a similar mistake, and also to counterbalance any dogmatic claims, they will tend to minimize the divine character of their own Moses. This is an equally grievous error. The answer is not in asserting either *one* or *none*. Rather the answer is in upholding the saving

power of *all* the prophets, all the saints, all the true sons of God.

As to the second attitude, there is a corresponding danger of an 'either-or' position. Some of the modern argument against the 'deification' of our heroes does seem to make sense. It is much easier to glorify a hero than to emulate him. Thus, consciously or otherwise, the religious ideal is often glorified into the very heavens, where it ceases to bear any relevance—or judgment—upon our situation here on earth. Such other-worldliness is surely unacceptable. But what is the alternative? Should we then drag our heroes down to the level where we are, and wallow in the complacency of this-worldliness?

The fact of the matter is that all great religions have taught that *all men are potentially divine!* But this potentiality tends to remain vague and vacuous, without some actuality to spur us on. Hence the need to keep before our consciousness the living example of a Life Fulfilled. It is for us a token, a promise, a reassurance that our lives too can reach fulfilment. That is the supreme function of Prophets or Men of God, in the divine order of things.

In substance, there are three categories in religious thought: the Divine, the Human, and the In-Between (or Mediator). Were it not for the third category, the gap between man and God would seem utterly unbridgeable. In the Bible, Moses is portrayed vividly and constantly in the mediating role: if he is made to appear 'human', it is only so that he might help others to become 'divine'.

DUAL PERSONALITY

Let us examine some of the evidence from the only authentic source we have: the *Pentateuch*, or Five Books of Moses.

To begin with, Moses is 'human' in that

he is subject to birth and death. He appears to us as a family man, a community leader, a teacher and guide. He is even subject to 'human emotions', so that we can (as, indeed, we must) identify ourselves with him. When he sees a man smiting his neighbour, he rushes to the defence of the victim. When he beholds, after a brief absence, that his people have sinned through false worship, he is angered, and breaks the stone tablets in his hands. He even presumes to use 'his own judgment' (as any of us might) in smiting the rock for water rather than in speaking to it as the Lord had instructed.

Ah, but here the identification abruptly ends! Moses *cannot*, in certain areas, use independent judgment. He is not an individual self in any ordinary sense; he is an instrument in the hands of God. Only for a brief moment, when the Divine Call first comes to him, does Moses exercise a will of his own. 'Who am I that I should go unto Pharaoh?' (Exodus 3:11). 'O Lord, do Thou send whomever Thou wilt.' (Ex. 4:13). And also only when he is exercising compassion, pleading on behalf of someone else, does he 'argue' with God for here there is utter selflessness, with no ego whatsoever involved. [Cf. Ex. 32:32: 'Wilt Thou not forgive their sin? If not, I pray Thee, blot me out of Thy book'.] Aside from these interludes, Moses' life is one long obedient unfoldment of the Divine Will. Hardly a chapter goes by, in the Books of Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy, where it is not specifically stated or clearly implied: 'The Lord spoke unto Moses . . . and Moses did as the Lord instructed.' [Biblical scholars claim that certain portions of these Books are later interpolations. This may well be so, as is the case with many ancient texts. Nonetheless, the total structure and the basic content remain unaffected.]

The 'dual existence' of Moses is expressed in the Bible text in phrases such as 'Moses ascended to God' (Ex. 19:3), 'The Lord descended' (19:20), 'Moses came down from the mountain' (32:15), or 'When Moses would enter his Tent, the Lord would speak with him.' (33:9). This phraseology reflects the dual nature of 'Moses' character both in his relation to God and in his relation to fellowman.

In his relation to God, there are two types of encounter spoken of in the Bible. When God first appears to Moses at the Burning Bush, it is an unexpected, overwhelming experience. 'And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look upon God.' (Ex. 3:7). However, at the Mount of Sinai, Moses appears to have engaged deliberately in prolonged and hard spiritual practice in order to receive the Divine Revelation. 'He was there with the Lord forty days and forty nights; he ate no bread and drank no water; and he wrote down on the tablets the terms of the covenant, the Ten Commandments. And when he came down from the mountain, he was not aware that the skin of his face was radiant after speaking with God.' (Ex. 34:28, 29). Elsewhere, too, we are assured that Moses had a direct and continuing communion with God. Witness the various allusions to the 'glory of God' manifesting itself in cloud or fire (Ex. 19:9; 24:13-18, etc.) ... or a striking realization such as 'under His feet there was the likeness of a pavement of sapphire, like the very sky for purity'. (Ex. 24:10). But even more emphatically: 'With him I speak mouth to mouth, plainly and not in riddles, and he beholds the likeness of the Lord.' (Num. 12:8) 'The Lord spoke to Moses face to face, as a man speaks to his friend.' (Ex. 33:11)

Similarly, in Moses' relationship to other people, there are two aspects to his personality, which on the surface seem contradic-

tory but which, in the light of his living on two planes of reality, are wholly consistent and complementary. One is his great humility; the other is, his utter fearlessness. 'Moses was a very humble man, more so than any other man on earth', the Bible declares. (Num. 12:3) When Aaron and Miriam disparaged him in a family matter, and suffered for it, he prayed for them. (Num. 12:13) When an attendant came running to him to notify him, in consternation, that two men in the camp were attaining ecstasy (even as Moses himself), Moses calmly replied: 'Are you jealous on my account? Would that all the Lord's people were prophets, that the Lord would put His spirit upon them!' (Num. 11:24-29). Earlier in his career, in a context of social organization, Moses gladly accepted the advice of Jethro, priest of Midian, for better planning and administration. All these were personal and non-spiritual matters. However, when something touched upon the word of God and his divine mission, Moses could be adamant and unflinching. How intrepid before Pharaoh's might, how unsullied by his beguilements! Thus, also, when Korah and his cohorts rose to challenge him in his spiritual leadership, Moses proved quite equal to the occasion. (Numbers 16): 'Ye shall know that *the Lord hath sent me* to do all these works; I have not done them of my own mind!' (16:28)

The two aspects of Moses' life come to a focus, when he deals directly with his people as their teacher and as agent of God. He is then effecting two things simultaneously: bringing God to them and bringing them to God. This, obviously, is something that only a Man of God can do. This convergence of two spheres is presented graphically in the Bible in connexion with the great encounter at Sinai. Said God to Moses: 'Lo, I come to thee

in a thick cloud, that the people may hear when I speak with thee, and may also *believe in thee forever*. (Ex. 19:9, Cf. also Ex. 14:31) Said the people to Moses, 'Speak thou with us, and we will hear; but let not God speak with us, lest we die. And Moses said to them, "Fear not" ... But the people stood at a distance, and Moses drew near to the thick darkness where God was.' (Ex. 20:16-18) Said Moses to the people: 'The Lord our God made a covenant with us ... *I stood between thee Lord and you*, to declare unto you the word of the Lord.' (Deut. 5:2-5)

Aware of the crucial role that he had to play, and endowed by God with the power to play it, Moses instructed a group of disciples, and prepared one in particular to carry on after him. (Cf. Num. 11:16, 17; 24, 25) 'And Joshua was full of the spirit of wisdom, for Moses had laid his hands upon him; and the children of Israel listened to him, and did as the Lord had instructed Moses.' (Deut. 34:9; Cf. also Num. 27:18-20) Moses also spoke of future prophets that will arise 'like unto me', and he instructed the people to differentiate between the false prophet who stresses 'signs and wonders' (psychic phenomena) and the genuine prophet who is to be judged by the truth of his teaching and the strength of his character. (Deut. 18:14-22; 13:2-5)

SPIRITUAL PRACTICE

This brings us now to Moses' teaching and doctrine, which is but a verbal extension of his life and character. Words, of course, are a poor substitute for the life itself. ['Behold, while I am yet alive with you this day, ye have been rebellious against the Lord; how much more after my death?'] (Deut. 31:27) Still, even the words remain powerful after some thirty-three centuries.

The Teaching of Moses falls into two

large categories of *Torah* and *Mitzvah*: Religious Truth and Religious Practice. The latter, in turn, is divided into Ethical and Spiritual Practices, encompassing relations between man and man and relations between man and God.

The Religious Truth is that of Divine Unity and Liberation, and of the innate divinity of man. 'Hear, O Israel, the Eternal is our God, the Eternal is One.' (Deut. 6:4) 'I am the Eternal thy God who brought thee out of Egypt, out of bondage.' (Ex. 20:2; Deut. 5:6) 'God created man in His own image.' (Genesis 1:27) 'Ye are children of the Lord your God.' (Deut. 14:1)

The ethical precepts are both an application of the divine truth that we are all one, and also a necessary training to predispose us toward Divine Unity. 'Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself: I am the Lord.' (Lev. 19:18) 'One *Torah*, one Law shall be for you and for the stranger sojourning with you.' (Num. 15:16) 'Thou shalt not murder, nor commit adultery, nor steal, nor bear false witness against thy neighbour, nor covet anything that is thy neighbour's.' (Ex. 20:13, 14; Deut. 5:17, 18) 'Justice, justice shalt thou pursue.' (Deut. 16:20)

The main thrust of Moses' appeal is in terms of perfecting the Inner Life and thus drawing closer to God. 'This *Mitzvah* in which I instruct you this day, is not too hard for thee, neither is it far off. It is not in heaven that thou shouldst say, "Who shall go up to heaven, and get it for us, and make us hear it, that we may do it?" Neither is it beyond the sea ... No, the Word is very near to thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart, to fulfil it!' (Deut. 30:11-14) 'I call heaven and earth to witness that I have set before thee life and death, the blessing and the curse; therefore *choose life*, that thou mayest live.' (Deut. 30:19) 'Be thou perfect with the Lord

thy God.' (Deut. 18:13) 'Ye shall be holy, for I the Lord Your God am holy.' (Lev. 19:2) 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, and with all thy strength.' (Deut. 6:5) 'What doth the Lord require of thee but to revere Him, to walk in all His ways, to love Him, and to worship Him with all thy mind and with all thy heart.' (Deut. 10:12) 'Man doth not live by bread alone, but by all that proceedeth from the mouth of the Lord doth man live.' (Deut. 8:3). 'If you long for the Lord your God, you will find Him, if only you seek Him with all your heart and soul.' (Deut. 4:29)

In order to facilitate the process of worship, Moses prescribed various spiritual aids and disciplines: To think and speak of love of God when at home, when on the way, when going to sleep and when getting up. (Deut. 6:7); to place *reminders* upon the hand and the forehead ('between the eyes'), upon the doorposts of the home and the gates of the city (6:8, 9); to add fringes upon the corners of garments 'so that when you look upon them you will remember the commandments of the Lord, and do them.' (Num. 15:39); to honour parents and elders (Ex. 20:12; Lev. 19:32); to observe the Sabbath, Holy Days and Festivals (Ex. 20:8-11; Lev. 23; Deut. 16:1-17); not to profane the Holy Name of God but rather to sanctify it (Ex. 20:7; Lev. 22:32); to use the Name of God for a blessing. ['Let them put My Name upon the children of Israel, and I will bless them.'—Num. 6:27; 'In every place where I cause My Name to be mentioned, I shall come unto thee and bless thee.'—Ex. 20:21]

Other aids and disciplines indicated in the Bible—either for all the people, or for special groups as the Priests or Levites, or for certain individuals as the Nazirites—are: continence (Ex. 19:14, 15); abstinence from wine and strong drink (Lev.

10:8, 9; Num. 6:3, 4); renunciation of property (Num. 18:20; Deut. 18:1, 2); dietary provisions (Lev. 11:43-47), avoidance of impure contacts (Lev. 21:1-8); the ritual use of water for purification (Ex. 30:17-21); the ritual use or offering of fire, incense, or food (Num. 8:1-4; Lev. 2:14-16; Lev. 23:10, 11; Num. 15:19-21; Deut. 14:22, 23); etc.

VISUAL SYMBOLS

One perplexity in the understanding of Moses pertains to the use of concrete symbols in worship. In some instances, they are employed by Moses—and very effectively; in other instances, they are proscribed—vigorously. This is a serious question for anyone who wishes to take worship earnestly. For almost all worship presupposes a Personal God, and a personal God presupposes some name, concept, or form, for the mind and heart of the worshipper to grasp. How shall we resolve this dilemma? It appears to this writer that an answer may be found if we examine the particular circumstances associated with the Mosaic prohibitions of 'idolatry'.

The major prohibitions, it will be noted, centre about Egypt. Having successfully escaped from Egyptian tyranny, Moses was especially determined not to return. ['... The Lord has warned you, "You must not go back that way again." ' (Deut. 17:14-16)] However, the Promised Land was far off, and the hardships of the desert were severe, so that the people were sorely tempted to return. ['The Israelites wept and said ... "We remember the fish that we used to eat in Egypt—free—and the variety of vegetables, and how we are almost starved." ' 'Why is the Lord taking us to that land to fall by the sword? ... It would be better for us to go back to Egypt!'. Num. 11:4-6; 14:3; also 21:4, 5)]

One of the magnetic forces for a return,

was the type of worship they had witnessed, or experienced, in Egypt: namely, a worship vivified and dramatized by the Nile, the Sun, the Calf, etc. (symbols of fruitfulness and of God's bounty). So now, too, they yearned for a familiar visual representation in their worship. In the absence of Moses, Aaron (his brother) was ready to accommodate the people in their demand. But Moses, cognizant of the life-and-death struggle on his hands, wanted to cut off all associations with Egypt, land of the oppressor. 'I am the Lord thy God who brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage; thou shalt not have other gods before Me; thou shalt not have images of that which is in heaven, or on the earth, or in the water . . . ' (Ex. 20: 2-4; Deut. 5: 6-8) This description answers well to associations of worship in Egypt. The contest here was between two types of civilization, two opposing ways of life: bondage and freedom. In this ultimate choice, there can be no compromise, 'for the Eternal your God is a jealous God' (this is the very next verse)—which is to say, Truth is One, and Loyalty is One, and we cannot live in two worlds at the same time.

Our assumption may be that Moses was essentially concerned with out-lawing a destructive way of life—a system of oppression, slavery and immorality and because the people were drawn to that way of life by certain forms of worship, he forbade those too. It is noteworthy that in another passage, where he rules out particular practices in worship, he pointedly gives this as the reason (and there he does not even mention images or symbols). Speaking of the time when the Israelites shall have entered the land of Canaan and possessed it, Moses forewarns: 'Do not inquire about their gods, saying, "How did those nations worship their gods? I too will follow the same practices!" You shall

not act thus toward the Lord your God, for they performed for their gods every abhorrent act that the Lord detests; they even offered up their sons and daughters in fire to their gods.' (Deut. 12: 30, 31)

Another revealing insight comes to us, when Moses speaks in a *general* vein, without reference to specific nations round about. There he is outspokenly tolerant as regards different forms of worship, though still insistent that his own people maintain the pattern set for them. 'And when you look up to the sky and behold the sun and the moon and the stars, the whole heavenly host, you should not be lured into bowing down to them or serving them. These the Lord your God allotted to the other peoples everywhere under heaven; but you the Lord took and brought out of that iron furnace of Egypt, to be unto Him a people of heritage, as you are this day,' (Deut. 4: 19, 20)

With this interpretation in mind, we can now readily understand and accept the many instances in the Bible where tangible images or visual symbols are employed, under circumstances where the above-mentioned danger is not present. The *Ner Tamid* (Eternal Light) of the seven-branched *Menorah*, fashioned in a particular design (Ex. 25: 31-40; Ex. 27: 20, 21), is a concrete symbol. The sacred vestments of Aaron the High Priest, with the *Urim V'Tumim* (Lights of Perfection) on the breastplate, were visual forms. (Ex. 28: 29, 30; Lev. 8: 1-8) Indeed the Sanctuary itself was one grand symbol. ['Let them make Me a Sanctuary, that I may dwell among them. (Ex. 25: 8) 'I will sanctify the Tent of Meeting and the Altar; Aaron also and his sons will I sanctify to minister to Me; and I will dwell among the children of Israel, and will be their God.' (Ex. 29: 44, 45)] More space is devoted, in the *Pentateuch*, to a description of the Sanctuary and its ap-

pertenances and rituals than to any other single project or subject. And the person who helped fashion its visual forms was highly extolled. 'Moses said to the Israelites: See, the Lord has singled out Bezalel. He has endowed him with a divine spirit of skill, ability, and knowledge in every kind of craft ... Let him (and others like him) perform expertly all the tasks connected with the service of the Sanctuary and carry out all that the Lord has commanded.' (Ex. 31:1-6; 35:30-36:4)

The most vivid imagery as well as symbolism is found in the following two selections. '(The Lord said to Moses) make two cherubim of gold ... They shall have their wings spread out, shielding the Ark-cover. They shall confront each other, the faces of the cherubim being turned toward the cover ... There I will meet with you, and speak with you, from above the Ark-cover, from between the two cherubim.' (Ex. 25:18-22) During their travels in the wilderness, the people were rebellious and were subjected to the attack of serpents. So they pleaded with Moses to intercede with the Lord on their behalf. He did so. 'Then the Lord said to Moses, "Make a *seraph* figure and mount it on a standard. And if anyone who is bitten looks at it, he shall recover ...' (Num. 21:4-9)

Commenting upon the latter example, the *Mishnah* (classical Rabbinic source) says: 'Did then the brass serpent possess the power of slaying or of bringing to life? No, but so long as the Israelites look upwards and subjected their hearts to their Father in Heaven, they were healed. But when they refused, they were destroyed.' This indeed is the true test of the value of any religious ritual, image, or symbol. Does it help bring the worshipper into God's Presence? If it does, then it is excellent. If not, then it is useless.

LATER TRADITION

In Judaism, the Tradition of the Rabbis—as found mainly in the Biblical commentaries of the Midrash and the Talmud—is important. It is therefore interesting and instructive to know the Rabbinic view of Moses, as expressed through elaboration of text, or through legend and homily. Here are a few relevant excerpts.

Moses' father was the outstanding man of *his* generation (truly worthy to be the progenitor of such a noble son.) ... The staff which Moses carried (and which was a token of the divine power accorded him), came to him through Jethro, priest of Midian. This staff had been handed down from generation to generation since the days of Adam.

Moses was most compassionate toward his suffering brethren, and even toward helpless animal creatures. Once he saw a lamb straying from the flock. He ran after it and tended it. Whereupon God said: Since you have such tenderness, you are the one that shall shepherd My flock ... When Moses addressed the Lord as 'the God of the spirits of all flesh.' (Num. 27:15), he was attesting thereby—and pleading on behalf of his people—that every individual should be treated considerately according to his own spirit and understanding.

Why did God appear to Moses in a lowly bush? To teach us that no spot on earth is without God's Presence, even a bush ... The Lord appears variously—to young and to old; to the weak and the strong—to each according to his nature of comprehension ... God said: I appeared to you at the Red Sea as a warrior, and I appeared to you at Sinai as a Teacher of *Torah*—indeed, I appear in many forms—but behind all those appearances 'I am the One Eternal God.'

'The Revelation that came to Moses was as clear as a bright mirror! ... Fifty degrees

of spiritual understanding were vouchsafed by God unto mankind; Moses achieved forty-nine of them'... Moses as Prophet imbued many others with prophecy, and yet his power did not diminish; even as one candle can kindle many without lessening its own light.

Even though Moses ascended to heaven, served as an angel of God, spoke to God face to face, and received the *Torah* at His hand, nonetheless, he too died. But he died by the kiss of God. Yes, the Righteous are even more beloved in death than in life.

From birth to death the life of Moses was enveloped with the veritable aura of a Man of God. Perhaps nowhere is this more explicitly stated than in Exodus 23:20, 21: 'I am sending an angel before you to guard you on the way, and to bring you to the place which I have made ready.

Pay heed to him and obey him...for *My Name is within him.*' And nowhere is this more beautifully summed up than in the reverent account of his passing from this earthly sphere, as recorded in the final chapter of the *Torah*: 'Moses went up to Mount Nebo, to the summit of Pisgah, and the Lord showed him the whole land... Then Moses, the servant of the Lord, died there, in the land of Moab at the word of the Lord (literally, "by the mouth of the Lord")... Moses was one hundred and twenty years old when he died; his eyes were undimmed and his vigour unabated... There arose not in Israel a Prophet like unto Moses whom the Lord knew face to face.'

The Bible's spiritual epitaph is: 'No one has known his burial place to this very day.' Is this not a poetic way of affirming the deathlessness of Moses, Manifestation of the Eternal God.

ŚIVA

(INTERVAL BETWEEN ENJOYMENT AND ITS NEGATION)

SWAMI NITYABODHANANDA

Śiva has many aspects though the most popular representations are of the cosmic dancer (Natarāja) and the *liṅgam*. Like a magician he engenders by his *Māyā* the diversity of world-phenomena and in this aspect he is *Māyāvin*. In a subtle sense he destroys and creates at the same time: he destroys a lower harmony to construct a higher one and in this aspect he is the symbol of consciousness, which abolishes a *status quo* to realize its transcendence on a superior plane.

Again, Śiva is Paśupati, guardian of souls whom he protects and goads on in the path of *mokṣa*. He is ascetic, Dhūrjatī,

but the lover and husband of Pārvatī, the Divine Mother, at the same time. As ascetic, as *Mahāyogin*, he reduced to ashes the god of love, Kāma, who came to disturb his meditation. But he is the god of love, the beloved husband of Pārvatī, whom he holds in eternal embrace in the aspect of Ardhanārīśvara. Kālidāsa in the invocatory verse in his drama *Mālavikāgnimitra* celebrates this aspect of Śiva, saying, 'though in eternal union with your wife, O, Śiva, you are untouched by desire and hence foremost amongst *yogins*'.

It is in this aspect that we are going to study him in this article. Though an

eternal *yogin* in order to accomplish a world purpose, to give a commanding general to the army of gods to fight against the demons he married Pārvatī. Subramanya their son assumed the leadership of the gods. Burning Cupid, then accepting marriage and then again under the aspect of Ardhanārīśvara giving to the world the glowing example of the supreme Advaitic position of *Asparśa-Yoga*—Śiva passes from negation to enjoyment and then again to negation demonstrating to the world thereby that the supreme Reality refuses itself to be contained either in the one or in the other, that is one cannot attain Reality neither by enjoyment nor by negation as it transcends both.

Again, Śiva is the one with the third eye, Trilocana whose powerful flame burnt not only Kāma, but also the god of death, Yama. As destroyer of Kāma, his third eye symbolizes his power of converting physical love into spiritual knowledge; as destroyer of Yama, he is conqueror of death, Mṛtyuñjaya.

As Natarāja, Śiva is the master of rhythm and music. All dancers in India invoke his benediction before beginning the performance. Śiva is also the divine author of the Sanskrit grammar. According to a tradition, he took his *damaru* and played and outflowed the first rules of Sanskrit grammar in the form of aphorisms. Pāṇini, the first grammarian, in summing up his first aphorism says: *Iti Māheśvarāṇi sūtrāṇi*, thus the aphorisms came from Śiva.

In studying the being and acts of Śiva, we shall follow the four modes of expression of the Trinity. The first of the four is the act of God of which the continuity of the world as a theatre of values is the proof.

We take two acts of Śiva to support this thesis: one, the drinking of the poison to save the world and two, the receiving of

the river Gaṅgā on his head. Gaṅgā was first in the heavens and, when she was to come down, nobody could bear the impact of her torrents except Śiva. He received her on his head and from there she flowed down to the earth. How much Gaṅgā contributed to India's material and spiritual welfare cannot be exaggerated; it is a matter of history.

Śiva's drinking poison and surviving it brings us the picture of God who accepts the sufferings of the world, but refuses to be crucified by it. It is one thing to allow, in an attitude of abandon, events and political forces to gain dominance and finally to take form as an act of immolation, which is survived by the incarnation's love and supreme pardon. It is quite another thing not to allow nature to gain dominance over God or incarnation, but to see beforehand the catastrophe and take the 'poison' of nature, (I mean, the nature of things) on himself. In Christ, we see nature and man taking their worst turn and Christ accepting to be crucified; but his love and pardon surviving with great force. In the act of Śiva, we see God not allowing nature to take her turn, but accepting the worst in the beginning to change its course.

The descent of the Gaṅgā as well as Śiva's intervention in it is a marvellous myth that explains how human effort combined with grace can change human destiny, not of an individual, but of thousands.

The line of Kings belonging to Raghu, that is Rāma's lineage, long before Rāma was born, came under a malediction and all the princes were reduced to ashes. There was a way out—a very difficult way—that if the Gaṅgā were to come down and her waters were to touch these ashes, they would come back to life.

One prince in the royal line whose name was Bhagīratha, coming to know of this curse on his ancestors and the way for re-

demption, wanted to work for their salvation. On coming to know that Śiva alone of the gods could receive the Gaṅgā on his head, Bhagīratha meditated and worshipped Śiva for hundreds of years and finally his wish was granted. So Gaṅgā came down with all her torrents of powerful waters and Śiva received her on his head and from him flowed down Gaṅgā to the spot where was piled up in a mountain the bones of those princes under curse. Prince Bhagīratha was waiting for her arrival by the side of the bones of his ancestors. He waited and waited and the waters did not arrive. So he went in search tracing the line by which the river probably could have taken to flow down from Śiva in the Himalayas. The prince came to a forest where traces of floods were, but no water. He was told that a great sage meditating in the centre of the forest knew of what had happened. The prince went before the sage and as the sage was in meditation with closed eyes there was no question of putting questions to him. He prayed by his side and the sage, knowing the prince's request, opened his eyes and asked him what he could do for him. It had happened in the following way: The Gaṅgā had come with all force and had flooded the forest, thus immersing the sage's pedestal of meditation and was threatening to wash him off. The sage then opened his eyes and took the waters by a twist of his hands and drank the whole of the river (1) thus making conditions favourable again for his meditation. Now the prince was to get the water out of the sage's body. So he prayed to the sage for that. The sage put his finger in his ears and took out a drop of water and threw it and off flowed in torrents again the Gaṅgā, the sacred goddess, made more sacred by the contact of the sage's body!

The sage's name was Jahnu. In one form or other, the Gaṅgā had become, for

some time, a part of his body and so she came to be known as his daughter. One of the many names of Gaṅgā is Jāhnavī, which means the daughter of Jahnu.

The prince Bhagīratha, the very incarnation of perseverance and devotion to his ancestors, had to encounter many more obstacles till he could bring the Gaṅgā to wash the bones and give his ancestors life. The prince's name today is associated with all difficult efforts which man proposes to do, efforts which are crowned with success, simply because he had faith in God and faith in himself.

We now come to the second mode of expression, the scheme which Śiva has shown to us by his personal example, of conflict and harmony. Śiva is an eternal *brahmacārin*. In order to answer to a cosmic purpose, he marries goddess Umā who is the incarnation of Śiva's own *śakti*, or his feminine counterpart. This marriage is to fulfil the world's need and not to satisfy his desire. In one cycle she was Dākṣāyanī, in the next cycle she was Pārvatī, the daughter of the Himalayas. The myth, which we are going to study, relates to his union with Pārvatī.

The gods lost their commandant of the armies and had none to lead their forces against the Asuras or demons. The gods went for the advice of Brahmā and Viṣṇu. They were told that if they could succeed in bringing about a marriage between Śiva and Pārvatī, their son would be the best commandant for their armies. But it was the most difficult and dangerous task.

Pārvatī at that time was a young girl, devoted to Śiva, heart and soul, worshipping him with the hope of one day uniting with him. How to change the mind of Śiva which was lost in the contemplation of the Infinite? The gods put their heads together and Indra had many striking ideas.

An atmosphere of spring, an atmosphere

that enchants the human mind, should be created round the place where Śiva has established himself in meditation. The cuckoos should sing, the flowers should spread their perfume and Eros, the god of love, should shower his arrows on the heart of the meditating Śiva to shake his mind and fix it on Pārvatī. All the people were requisitioned, the spring-god, the Cupid and their aides, and very soon the height of the Himalayas, where spring never can bring flowers and cuckoos, was converted into a veritable spring season.

Days passed. Śiva's mind, which was steeped for ages and ages in meditation, was getting shaken bit by bit. He brought it again and again under control. When he found that his mind was really getting out of control, he opened his eyes. To his surprise he found that the spring was surrounding him, that the cuckoos were chanting and the whole environment was not one for meditation. He was annoyed. Pārvatī was meditating at a distance in front of him. He saw at a distance Eros seated on the branch of a tree and aiming his arrows at him. Eros has his arrows made of flowers and his bow of sugarcane. At the sight of Eros (Cupid) the idea immediately flashed in the mind of Śiva that all that was a project against him to change his mind. He was angry. And when Śiva gets angry his third eye on the forehead opens and it emits fire. His third eye opened and the fire that came out first burnt Cupid to ashes. That fire would have burnt down the world itself but for loud prayers of the gods.

A word will be necessary here about the third eye of Śiva before we pass on. We said whenever Śiva was angry his third eye opened. But then, it should not be understood that his third eye was the symbol of anger. Rather, it was the symbol of knowledge and illumination. The burning of Cupid by the fire of the third eye is

also symbolic. Physical passion is burned by knowledge, burned in the sense of being transformed. Spiritual knowledge alone is the fire that can burn desire and passion. It is the knowledge that results from the conjunction of the heart and head. The forehead is the field of this conjunction. Cupid was burnt, but he continues to live without form in human hearts. It means that the same knowledge that burnt down passion must be used to come to a recognition of Cupid's place in life. A recognition is always a way to transcendence and not domination by force.

In various traditions the third eye has been associated with spiritual knowledge, with illumination. Among some primitive tribes it was a custom or rite to pierce the centre of the forehead with a hot iron or burning charcoal, for they believed that by that ritual man was helped on to illumination. I came upon a Christ image of the fourteenth century where Christ is represented with a third eye!

Śiva went back into meditation. But then it was not easy to get back to depths when once disturbed. He had to hear to the prayers of Rati, the wife of Eros who spoke to him thus:

'Lord, my husband was acting according to his nature, nature assigned to him by God, and was acting according to the order of his superiors. How is it that he merited death while doing his duty?'

There is something very human about Śiva. He gets angry quickly and gets appeased also quickly. And when appeased, he showers his benedictions.

Śiva replied to Rati: 'Your husband is dead only in body, but he will continue to live without body in the hearts of the people churning their hearts.'

Thus Cupid, who was burnt by Śiva, was resuscitated. By saying that he will continue to live without body or form Śiva meant that none can attack him or get rid

of him. If one knows by what form Eros will present himself, one can take precautions or one can get rid of him. Since he has no form and hence can hide in the place where least one can expect him to be, Cupid is unconquerable. Śiva was speaking of the elusive character of love, which disappears when attacked but appears in another form. Śiva did more than the resuscitation of Eros. Śiva made Eros eternal in human hearts. Two names for Eros in Sanskrit: Anāṅga, he who has no body and second Manmatha, meaning, he who churns the human heart, indicate his eternity and how he works.

Śiva, in order to promote world welfare, that is to say, to give the gods a general, accepted the ways of Cupid in himself! He married Pārvatī and had a son, named Subramanya or Kārtikeya, who became the most redoubtable general of the gods' army and kept the Titans under his heels. But then Śiva did not stop there. He gave half of his body to his dear wife to live in eternal juxtaposition with her. This was not attachment for her body but complete control of himself even though he was in constant contact. He was the *yogin* of *yogins*.

Yogin first, then in conflict with Eros, then accepting him, that is to say accepting to be married and that specifically for achieving a higher harmony: this scheme evidences the design of conflict-harmony which Śiva adopts to show to man that the plenitude of being and experience can never be communicated or contained either by affirmation or by negation. The plenitude is in between the two.

When we exercise our liberty in any circumstance we come to feel in us two voices speaking: 'I shall; I shall not, or I want this, I do not want this.' This way of contradiction, or conflict is the manner in which our liberty manifests. This is a contradiction on the plane of action, not

in the field of spirit. It is contradiction in the field of action, because we cannot put the two alternatives in action *at the same time*. In the spiritual realm 'shall' and 'shall not' give us the extent or the limit of our possibilities, of our liberty. Is it not the Being that speaks, that expresses yes and no in the process of extending itself in opposite directions of existence and non-existence, in the direction of enjoyment and its negation? When we say 'I shall and I shall not' or 'yes and no', we provoke an interval; and then *we enter into that interval and dilate it. It is in this dilatation that our real liberty resides. In that interval we do not search to do, we search to be—we are what we are.*

What is true in man is not satisfied by enjoyment. We usually think that man's discontent comes from the sense of lack of what he has. This is not true. Man's dissatisfaction comes from the sense of what he is and what he is not. What he is and is not can express only by is and is not. It is true that this dissatisfaction searches to satisfy its thirst by 'possessing' things, experiences. Here starts the search for enjoyment. But in reality it is the Being that manifests as the search for enjoyment. Can Being be satisfied? Never. It goes from enjoyment to negation or refusal to enjoy and then to enjoyment and thus without end. In the case of the spiritual man, he comes to a stop in realizing the Being, which projects yes and no, enjoyment and negation and which in the process of projecting, realizes itself. The unregenerate human being goes from enjoyment to negation without knowing that it is Being that is involved in this movement from yes to no.

The Being in man cannot be grasped or defined. When man after having accomplished his choicest desire says: 'Then what', he is expressing the plenitude of

Being which his cherished experience could not grasp or contain. Speaking of Being the philosophies say: 'It is neither good, nor bad; neither empiric nor transcendental; neither simply human nor simply divine; it *is and* it is not. It is both is and is not. It is a mixture of two levels, of continuity and discontinuity, of peace and movement.' Herein lies the secret of Being. It is both is and is not. The liberty of Being is contained only in this dynamism that infills the movement between *is* and *is not*. Śiva was expressing this liberty of Being by enjoyment and negation.

If Being can be defined only by *is* and *is not* what about the manifestations of Being like affectivity, love, search for enjoyment, etc.? There are moments when manifestations like love or sorrow assume such proportions and intensity that the experiencing subject is all love or all sorrow and nothing more. In that state there is no subject as an entity and no object as object. Both are united in the experience of love or sorrow. It will not be correct to say that in that state the Being and manifestation have become equal. For, in a state of equality manifestation as manifestation does not exist. It is all Being and nothing else. It is more correct to say that the all-pervasiveness of the subject by the manifestation is a precious moment when the distinction between Being (the subject) and manifestation (experience) is completely lost. How can we define or speak of that moment except by *is* and *is not*? It is a moment when manifestation gets the prestige of Being.

When nothing is left of the experiencing subject as an entity, when all is love or affectivity, it is quite necessary that this sensitivity, in order to be what it is, in order to renew itself, must touch its limits, terminate and negate itself and then re-affirm by beginning again. No sensitivity,

if it is alive, and vibrating, can live only by affirmation or by enjoyment. It pushes its limits to the extreme until by the law of discontinuity it stops or negates itself to begin again.

Śiva by moving between enjoyment and negation was not obeying the laws of Nature which is manifestation, but was incarnating Being in his acts. It is proper that he should show in life the moment when the manifestation of love gains all the prestige of being and all its dynamism. Instead of becoming slave to enjoyment and negation, Śiva created the interval in enjoyment and dilated it to extreme limits of enjoyment and negation.

The third mode of expression is the incarnation God takes in order to show transcendence, in spite of the limitation of incarnation. Śiva's incarnations are not so numerous as those of Viṣṇu. The great philosopher and reformer Śrī Śaṅkarācārya of the eighth century is respected as the incarnation of Śiva. The great light of knowledge of Advaita philosophy, which Śaṅkara brought into this world, is really characteristic of the spiritual force that Śiva is. Śaṅkara's life as a monk of the highest realization and his acts as the one who reformed and resuscitated Hinduism are testimonies that in him Śiva took the human form.

As regards the fourth mode of expression, the utilization of symbols, we have seen Śiva's role in the churning of the ocean, how he assimilated the poison and saved the world and also saved the nectar of immortality namely Supreme Knowledge. Śiva has many serpents as ornaments. Serpents symbolize the psychic energy. Śiva, as the Master who decorates himself by serpents, is the example of the conversion of psychic energy into spiritual energy. Śiva is the only one among the Trinity who has the third eye. Here again, Śiva becomes the symbol of illumination,

of a superior knowledge whose instrument is the eye but in reality is the eye of the eye—the Self.

The Śaivaite philosophical systems speak of Śiva as the white radiance of knowledge that goes up, a self-revealing, self-knowing, self-sufficient Reality that needs no intermediaries. This radiance is personal and impersonal at the same time. How can mythology represent such a Śiva? He is represented as a force that can be contained neither in enjoyment nor in its negation but the interval of the two. The interval embodies: is and is not, the two worlds of existence and non-existence, the world of enjoyment and its negation. Enjoyment condenses our attitude towards existence and negation condenses our attitude towards non-existence. Śiva, as the white radiance, could not be enclosed in these two attitudes. He is the force that seeks a higher harmony.

This seeking a higher harmony brings into being a value quite different from the means employed; in other words, brings in a complete discontinuity. Here is a very interesting myth which narrates how Śiva 'succumbed' to a temptation.

You may remember in the myth of the churning of the ocean to prevent the nectar of immortality from falling into the hands of the demons, Viṣṇu had to disguise as a charming young woman and ask the demons to sit down and prepare for distribution. While they were meditating with closed eyes, Viṣṇu got away with the urn and disposed it in the heavens.

Śiva was present and was enchanted by the young woman. Later on, Śiva asked Viṣṇu that he would like to see her in that enchanting form. Viṣṇu agreed and took

the form again. Śiva was so much enchanted by her beauty that he had a union with her. As a result, the god Aiyyappan, or the god of ascetism came out of the thigh of Viṣṇu. In a way this myth reminds us of the birth of Minerva from the thigh of Jupiter. Today, in temples dedicated to Viṣṇu or Kṛṣṇa, Aiyyappan has a place of worship and is consecrated a small temple to Viṣṇu's right. The yearly festival of Aiyyappan consists of forty-one days of fasting and prayer and the practice of chastity, which evidences the special accent on asceticism.

Śiva dressed in tiger-skin with a trident fixed on the ground, surrounded by the snow of the Himalayas, deeply absorbed in meditation is a favourite image for meditation for the Hindus. He is specially the ideal and inspirer of monks as different from Viṣṇu who has always the goddess of prosperity to serve him at his feet. Śiva, on the contrary, is a beggar of beggars, the king among renouncers who has renounced all and hence has all. He is the conqueror of death in two senses. Firstly, he killed the god of death who wanted to take away Śiva's devotee; secondly, on Śiva's breast dances Kālī (Time), Kālī who has death in her hands.

Side by side with these severe aspects Śiva presents very pleasing aspects, as the cosmic dancer and great lover of music, as a husband capable of deep affection and attachment, as a god who is easily pleased and who, when pleased, showers benedictions. Above all we shall remember that serene face of his when he was drinking the poison that would have destroyed the world, the serenity with which he constructs in the midst of destruction.

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA IN BRITTANY AND NORMANDY

SWAMI VIDYATMANANDA

On August 4, 1900, in Paris, Swami Vivekananda added a postscript to a letter Josephine MacLeod had written to Sara Bull in Perros-Guirec. Later in the month Swamiji wrote two letters to Sister Nivedita in Perros-Guirec. In September the Swami addressed a letter to Swami Turiyananda, then in California, commencing: 'Now I am staying on the sea-coast of France.' This was presumably at Perros-Guirec; for there is a note dated September 22, headed Perros-Guirec, from Swamiji to Alberta Sturges in Paris. Around October 8 Swamiji wrote to 'Mademoiselle'—almost certainly Josephine MacLeod—to say he was returning to Brittany for a few days. Nivedita's *The Master as I Saw Him* contains several references to Swami Vivekananda in Brittany in September, 1900.

From these evidences we know that friends of Vivekananda were in Brittany in the late summer and early autumn of 1900, and that Vivekananda went there also. Perros-Guirec is a small fishing village twelve kilometres (seven miles) from the important town of Lannion, on the north coast of Brittany, where the English Channel joins the Atlantic.

One additional fact known about Swami Vivekananda's travels at this time is that he visited Mont-Saint-Michel. This famous medieval monastery also is on the English Channel, east of Perros-Guirec, in Normandy.

All the evidences available, providing clues to Swamiji's movements in France, August 3, 1900, to October 24, 1900, together with a calendar of the Swami's known activities during those eighty-three days, are given in an article entitled 'Swami Vivekananda in France'. This account was

published in the March, 1967, number of *Prabuddha Bharata*. The reader of 'Swami Vivekananda in Brittany and Normandy' is referred to that article.

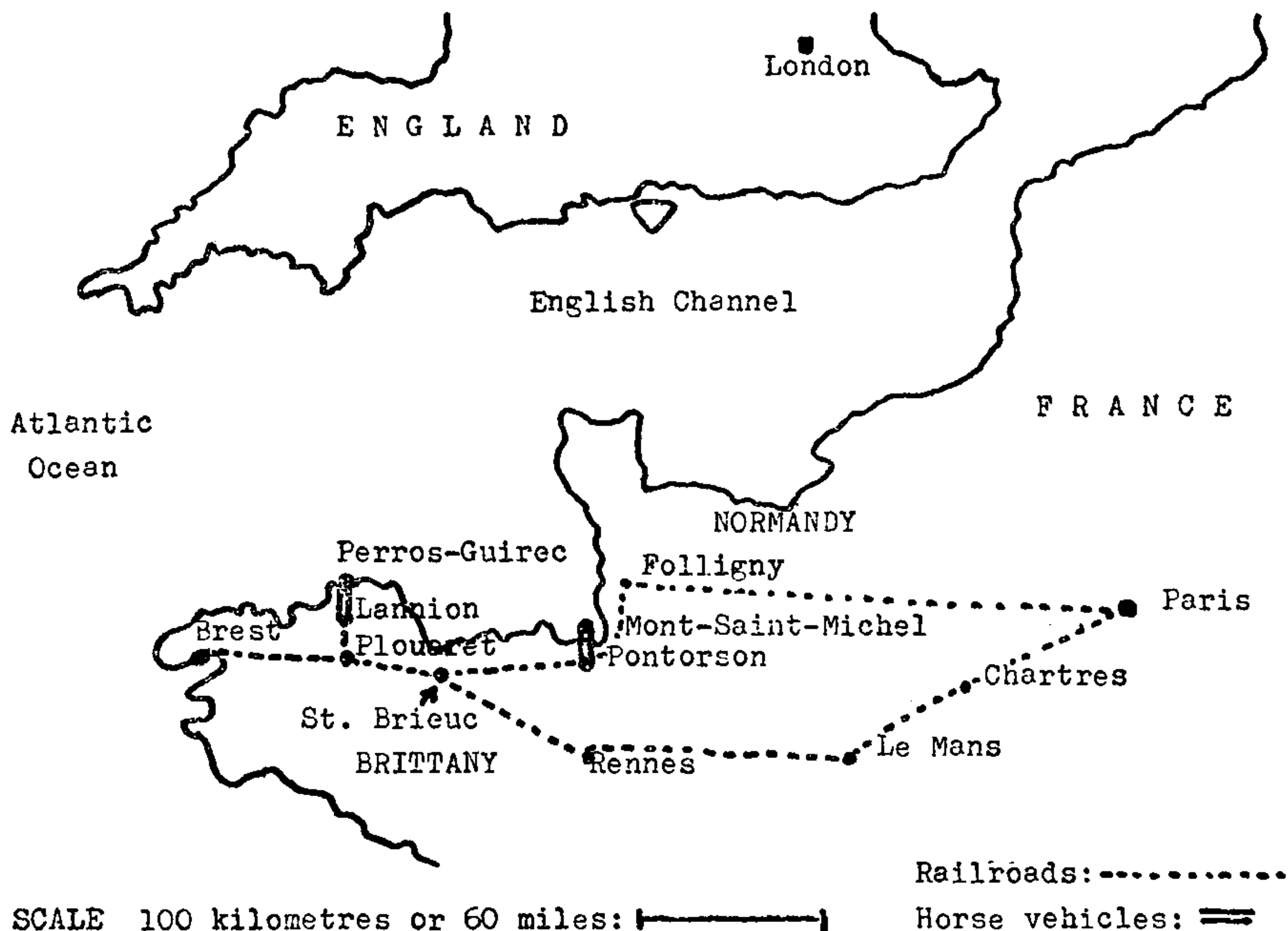
As best we can tell, Swami Vivekananda was in Brittany in 1900 not more than eighteen days, on two trips: Monday, September 17, to Friday or Saturday, September 28 or 29; and Monday, October 15, to Friday or Saturday, October 19 or 20. Half a month in a life of thirty-nine years is not a considerable length of time. And no great accomplishments are recorded, as having been made by the Swami during this period. Yet everything Vivekananda did is interesting to his admirers and important to his biographers. Since the events of these days have not been investigated, we have good reason to study them as thoroughly as we can.

But—as the reader will see for himself in the pages which follow—historical evidences concerning Swamiji's sojourns in Brittany and visit to Mont-Saint-Michel are very slight. And almost nothing new has been discovered. Much that is written here consists of supposition, based on the few facts extant, enlivened by an investigation at Perros-Guirec and at Mont-Saint-Michel sixty-seven years after Swamiji's passage.

In September and October of 1967, I was in Brittany and Normandy on almost the same days Swamiji was there in 1900. Indeed, I was at Mont-Saint-Michel on the very day he visited this great abbey—the feast day of the Archangel Michael, September 29. I followed the same rail lines Swamiji must certainly have used in 1900, going by train from Paris to Perros-Guirec, from Perros-Guirec to Mont-Saint-Michel, and from Mont-Saint-Michel back to Paris. Before going to Brittany and

Normandy, and after returning, I consulted books, photographs, train schedules, and other documents at the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris, dealing with the places

she found her way into a broader life by marrying, in 1870, a Norwegian nationalist and noted violinist. This daughter of a rich Wisconsin lumberman became used



Map showing routes in 1900: Paris to Perros-Guirec, Perros-Guirec to Mont-Saint-Michel, and Mont-Saint-Michel to Paris.

and the period. At Perros-Guirec I had two interviews with the Mayor, M. Yves Le Paranthoën, and talks with several other people having had long association with the community. As a result, a campaign was organized to find in Perros-Guirec some trace of Swami Vivekananda's stay there. This effort is described in a later section of this article. At Mont-Saint-Michel I consulted personnel at the abbey and at the Historical Museum. These sources and procedures made possible the account which follows.

Mrs. Ole Bull was a woman of means and taste. She was born and brought up in the Midwest of the United States, but

to travel and to the ways things were done by people with worldly polish. In the latter part of the nineteenth century Americans frequently sought refinement in Europe. Henry James' well-known book, *The American*, written in 1875, is a fictional treatment of this theme: an unsophisticated but intelligent American, who has made money and wishes to experience the best the world has to offer, aims to gain culture in France.

Mr. Francis H. Leggett, a wealthy businessman of New York, and his wife, the former Mrs. William Sturges, were in this typical of their generation. They had been married in Paris in 1895 and were in

Europe again in 1900. Betty MacLeod Leggett had visited Paris as a girl, and after marrying William Sturges of Chicago, she had travelled frequently abroad with her husband, often accompanied by her sister, Josephine MacLeod. Mrs. Leggett's daughter by her first marriage, Alberta Sturges, was in 1905 to marry the nephew of the Earl of Sandwich, who succeeded to the title in 1916. The only child of Francis H. Leggett and Betty—Frances—in due course married David Margesson, afterwards Viscount Margesson who was the son of Lady Isabel Margesson, a great admirer of Vivekananda's in London. Frances Leggett (after her divorce she took back her maiden name) is now aged seventy and lives in her family home, Ridgely Manor, in upstate New York, a place often visited in the olden days by Swamiji. Frances Leggett has supplied material for this article and for my earlier article on Vivekananda in France.

Others of Swamiji's friends who had ties with Europe were the George Hales of Chicago. After Mr. Hale's death, they migrated to Florence along with other Chicago families. Mary Hale eventually married a wealthy Florentine, Commendatore Matteini. Swamiji mentions in a letter meeting the Hales in 1896 in Florence.

Such were Swamiji's friends. Many of them spoke some French, which at the turn of the century occupied the position English does now, as being an international language. These Americans, as did more and more of their compatriots, travelled abroad often, mixing with English aristocrats and French artists and thinkers. What is more natural than that Sara Bull, the Leggetts, and Josephine MacLeod should want to introduce Swamiji to this world and its ways, and have their friends meet the Swami?

That is what happened. Swamiji was

in Europe once in 1895 and twice in 1896. He learned a great deal about Europe on these trips. That he understood the genius of France and the very different genius of Germany, and sensed far in advance the possibility of conflict between the two, can be seen in his 'The East and the West' and 'Memoirs of European Travel'. But it remained until the 1900 trip for Swamiji to settle down in France and make the acquaintance of the cosmopolitan people who gathered there.

Mr. and Mrs. Leggett, Josephine MacLeod—she was often referred to as Joe or Joe-Joe and in later years as Tantine—, and Sara Bull were all in France in the summer of 1900. So was Sister Nivedita. The Exposition Universelle Internationale was held at that time, and they were thus able to enjoy this remarkable spectacle. As their headquarters, Mr. and Mrs. Leggett leased a comfortable house at 6 Place des Etats-Unis. The reason for Swamiji's coming to Paris was the invitation obtained for him by Gerald Noble, an old family friend of the Leggetts, to speak at the Congress of the History of Religions, held in connexion with the Exposition. Swamiji stayed at 6 Place des Etats-Unis some of the time, and used it as his mailing address. He met many celebrated people there. But to learn something of the French, and of French culture, Swamiji chose to stay much of the time he was in Paris at the fifth-floor flat of the French writer, Jules Bois.

As the Leggetts had installed themselves in town, close to the Exposition and Paris's other attractions, Sara Bull took a house on the picturesque and healthful Brittany coast. Thus she and her friends, including Vivekananda, could if they chose be away from the heat and excitement of Paris, at the seashore. Frances Leggett, a little girl at the time she knew her, describes Sara Bull in these terms: 'I

doubt that Mrs. Bull spoke French. As I remember her and/or have heard tell, she was a very quiet, gentle woman to meet, very provincial in type, not at all the type seeking cultivation and society in Europe. She really was a typical Bostonian, without being a Proper Bostonian, as the saying goes. She was closely in touch with the Boston intelligentsia of her day, knew William James, etc. No doubt her reason for being in France at all that summer was the presence of the Swami and possibly to make a base for Nivedita, who came for the same reason.'

In 1900 Perros-Guirec had about three thousand inhabitants. It was a typical Breton fishing port, with stone houses, old churches, shrines to half-legendary local saints, and two sheltered beaches. There was a view of breakers smashing on red rocky outcroppings and of several small islands at sea. Old photos show that in 1900 the women of Brittany wore habitually the striking provincial dress worn today only on festival occasions.

Brittany is not a long distance from Paris. One could in 1900, as one can today, leave Paris at a convenient hour in the morning and be at the seaside by mid afternoon. To reach Perros-Guirec one takes a Brest express train, leaving from the Montparnasse Station in Paris, the 532 kilometres (about 300 miles) to Plouaret. Here a correspondence train waits to take one seventeen kilometres farther, to Lannion. This is the end of the rail line. In 1900 one took a horse-drawn vehicle, a cart or charabanc, the final twelve kilometres to Perros-Guirec. Nivedita in *The Master as I Saw Him* describes her conveyance, Perros-Guirec to Lannion, as a 'peasant market-cart'. Today one takes a bus, which starts from the Lannion railroad station and makes the trip to Perros-Guirec in a few minutes.

A French *Baedeker* of 1893 describes

Perros-Guirec in these terms: 'A village on a little bay of the same name, with a small port and some bathing places. One can take an interesting excursion to Ploumanac'h five kilometres away, remarkable for its rocky formations, where there is a chapel of St. Guirec, with a statue to which the local girls affix their scarf pins, in the hope of thus being blessed with finding a husband.' The *Guides Joanne* of 1901-1902 gives two pages to Perros-Guirec. The increased attention in the latter description suggests that in the interval Perros-Guirec had enlarged in importance as a resort centre. This is certainly the case, and the increase continued. Photos from the 1890's of the principal beaches, the Plage de Trestrignel and the Plage de Trestraou, show a few scattered rooming houses, cottages, and tents for bathers. In pictures taken at the turn of the century, one finds that the hills surrounding the beaches had become built up. Today Perros-Guirec has a population of six thousand, considerably amplified in the summer. Hotels and apartments have been built, the city centre is up to date and attractive, there are one or two art galleries and antique shops, and there is a harbour for pleasure craft. At the Plage de Trestraou the town has built bathhouses, a boating club, a casino, and a parking place for cars and trailers.

The big stone houses of the early 1900's still remain, surrounding the beaches, and show that sixty years ago Perros-Guirec was inhabited in the summer by people of wealth and refinement. I covered on foot every road in the vicinity of the two beaches, looking through gates and into gardens of the houses which appeared to date from 1900, wondering: Which? The location of Sara Bull's house has not been recorded. How she obtained it and through whom—also unknown. I was only assuming her house had been on the

Plage de Trestrignel or the Plage de Trestraou; perhaps it was somewhere else along the coast or even back from the water's edge.

What clues we have are very slight, not enough to give an identification. Frances Leggett says that her mother referred to the house as 'pretty, with a walled garden.' But that could have described so many. A great number of houses in France are walled, and many have gardens. In *The Master as I Saw Him* Nivedita gives an indication or two:

'When I said good-bye to him in Brittany in September, 1900, I was on the eve of returning alone to England, there to find friends and means, if possible, for the Indian work... the moment was critical to the fate of the disciple, and this he did not fail to realize. Suddenly, on my last evening in Brittany, when supper was some time over, and the darkness had fallen, I heard him at the door of my little arbour-study, calling me into the garden. I came out, and found him waiting to give me his blessing before leaving, with a man-friend (Jules Bois), for the cottage where they were both housed.

"There is a peculiar sect of Moham-medans," he said, when he saw me, "who are reported to be so fanatical that they take each newborn babe, and expose it, saying, 'If God made thee, perish! If Ali made thee, live!' Now this which they say to the child, I say, but in the opposite sense, to you, to-night—"Go forth into the world, and there, if I made you, be destroyed! If Mother made you, live!"

Yet he came again next morning, soon after dawn, to say farewell, and in my last memory of him in Europe, I look back once more from the peasant market-cart, and see his form against the morning sky, as he stands on the road

outside our cottage at Lannion, with hands uplifted, in that Eastern salutation which is also benediction.'

While waiting for the time to arrive for the appointment with the Mayor, I tried to recall what is known about the events of Swamiji's eighteen days in Perros-Guirec.

That Swamiji in Brittany thought about, and talked about, Buddhism and its relation to Hinduism has been reported. His conversations on these subjects are summarized by Swami Nikhilananda in his biography of Vivekananda:

'Contrasting Buddhism with Hinduism, he one day said that the former exhorted men to "realize all this is an illusion," while Hinduism asked them to "realize that within the illusion is the Real". Of *how* this was to be done, Hinduism never presumed to enunciate any rigid law. The Buddhist command could only be carried out through monasticism; the Hindu might be fulfilled through any state of life. All alike are roads to the One Real... Thus Buddhism became the religion of a monastic order, but Hinduism, in spite of its exaltation of monasticism, remains ever the religion of faithfulness to daily duty, whatever it may be, as the path by which men may attain to God.'

Swamiji must have also thought about himself, the work he had done, and what was ahead for him. He had recently felt a growing sense of detachment and wish to give up his role of leader. This has been documented in many ways. He had expressed this in letters to Sara Bull, Joe MacLeod, and Nivedita. As he said, 'The glamour is off life.' The mood is clearly shown in his letter from 'the seacoast of France' to Swami Turiyananda:

'My body and mind are broken down; I need rest badly. In addition, there is not a single person on whom I

can depend ; on the other hand, so long as I live, all will become very selfish depending upon me for everything... I have cut myself off by a will...

Now I have done my part. Don't write me any more about these things ; do not even mention the subject. I have no opinions whatever to give on that subject.'

Then there was Nivedita's misunderstanding with Swamiji, provoked to some extent by this change of mood. Vivekananda was growing less concerned with worldly matters, while the energetic Nivedita was eager to go ahead with new projects. She was puzzled and hurt by what she interpreted as disapproval of, or coldness toward, her on the part of Swamiji. In August, Nivedita had gone to stay with Sara Bull at Perros-Guirec. There was an exchange of letters between Nivedita and Swamiji which failed to clear up the misunderstanding. When Swamiji arrived in Perros-Guirec in September, the difficulty was resolved, as we learn from Nivedita's description of her parting with her *guru*, reproduced above. Pravrajika Atmaprana writes in her *Sister Nivedita* that the poem 'A Benediction,' 'in which were condensed all the hopes, aspirations, and good wishes of a Master to his disciple' was presented to Nivedita by Swamiji at Perros-Guirec :

The mother's heart, the hero's will,
The sweetness of the southern breeze,
The sacred charm and strength that dwell

On Aryan altars, flaming, free ;
All these be yours, and many more
No ancient soul could dream before—
Be thou to India's future son

The mistress, servant, friend in one.

The healing of the rift was accomplished so rapidly and thoroughly that Nivedita left Perros-Guirec for England, there to commence some new work, while her Master was still in Brittany. Six years

later Nivedita referred to the *rapprochement* with Swamiji at Perros-Guirec in these words, in a letter to Sara Bull quoted by Lizelle Reymond in *The Dedicated* :

'You remember that Swamiji made me feel free to see things a little ahead, and plan. If I were to die I think that I would like you to take the Bairn to Brittany and show him the garden in which Swamiji gave me that great final blessing—his apostolic charge to me.'

Fourth, Swamiji, on September 22, composed a charming poem addressed to Alberta Sturges in Paris, to congratulate her on her twenty-third birthday. A letter accompanied the verse :

Perros Guirec
Bretagne

22nd September, 1900

To Miss Alberta Sturges
on her 23rd birthday

The mother's heart, the hero's will,
The softest flower's sweetest feel ;
The charm and force that ever sway
The altar fire's flaming play ;
The strength that leads, in love

obeys ;

Far-reaching dreams, and patient
ways,

Eternal faith in Self, in all
The sight Divine in great in small ;
All these, and more than I could see
Today may 'Mother' grant to thee.

Ever yours with love and blessings,
Vivekananda

Dear Alberta,

This poem is for your birthday. It is not good, but it has all my love. I am sure, therefore, you will like it.

Will you kindly send a copy each of the pamphlets there to Madame Besnard, Clairoix près Compiègne, Oise, and oblige ?

Your well-wisher,
Vivekananda

It was characteristic of Swamiji that he could at the same time contemplate his own retirement from the scene, give a positive direction to a disciple's impetus, and play the indulgent uncle to a young lady.

Fifth, the plans to leave Paris in late October and travel to Vienna, Constantinople, Athens, and Egypt were almost certainly concretized while Swamiji was at Perros-Guirec. Josephine MacLeod was there. Frances Leggett has supplied a sentence from a letter written by her mother to Joe on September 7 from Germany: 'Your 6 : 30 A.M. letter from home [6 Place des Etats-Unis] came today. You are in Mystic Brittany, *enfin* [finally], and Melton with you.' Joe had had in her mind for more than a year the project of this trip. Mme Emma Calvé wanted to rest from her singing that winter in a warm climate. To go to Egypt when Paris grew damp and cold was one of the things leisured people did in 1900. And so the plans were made. That party travelling toward the Middle East included as well as Vivekananda, Joe MacLeod, Emma Calvé, Jules Bois, and Hyacinthe Loyson and his wife. From Egypt, as we know, Swamiji abruptly left for India, where he remained for another year and a half, until his passing away at Belur Math on July 4, 1902.

If we wish to indulge in speculation, we can guess, perhaps with some likelihood of being right, that Swamiji at Perros-Guirec occupied himself in some of the following ways.

We may assume that he sat quietly and looked at the water, watching the white breakers curl against the rose-coloured granite headlands and the Seven Isles out at sea.

Perhaps Swamiji took walks in the lanes, which in Brittany seem almost like tunnels. The bordering hedgerows are centuries old. Year after year the plants

have dropped their leaves, and the leaves have turned to compost and to earth, the plants mounting ever higher.

Vivekananda could have looked at the many *calvaires* erected at road crossings. A *calvaire* is a pillar of granite, crowned usually with a carved representation of Christ on the cross, and other figures associated with the Passion. *Calvaires* are particularly Breton; people erected them as thank-offerings for some favour of grace. These shafts served also as visual aids for use by the priests. In the days before reading was wide-spread, the fathers found it useful to instruct their flocks through pointing out scenes on the *calvaires* and explaining their religious significance.

Swamiji may have entered some of the old churches of the region. The church of St. Jacques at Perros-Guirec is beautiful and curious; and the chapel at La Clarté on a wind-swept height overlooking the sea, is a sixteenth-century treasure. The *Michelin Guide* gives it a star, as being worthy of special attention. We read in the official *Life* of Swami Vivekananda that the Swami 'was always the religious observer. In some small chapel in Brittany, or in the great cathedrals of Paris, he saw the points of similarity between the rituals of Hinduism and Roman Catholicism.'

Perhaps Swamiji witnessed what is called in Brittany a *pardon*. A *pardon* is a day of pilgrimage, at which time people of a locality assemble at the church to seek forgiveness for their faults and to resolve to live in a more exemplary way in the future. These *pardons* are colourful religious festivals, usually occurring in the summer. For the occasion the people wear the ancient costumes of the province. There are processions, led by church dignitaries in their finest vestments. Images from the churches are carried through the streets, followed by groups of pilgrims

chanting songs and prayers to the Lord.

Brittany is known as a land in which religion has for centuries had a strong hold on the people, and where local seers and wonder-workers are many and vivid in the memories of the populace. Shrines big and small are to be found at many crossroads. Thus the atmosphere of Brittany can be described as almost Indian. I dare speculate that Swamiji felt happy in that setting. I believe he must have felt at home.

Did Swamiji at Perros-Guirec think of the movement he had been instrumental in starting, and its future? Did he, seeing his spiritual children yet unborn, cast a gracious glance in their direction? Did he smile over those who, two generations later, loving him, should try to find out everything they could about him, including the location of his residence or other concrete links with him at Perros-Guirec? It is pleasant to think so.

Perhaps Swamiji at Perros-Guirec simply drifted 'up with the flood tide, down with the ebb,' joking with Sara Bull and Joe, trying to talk French with Jules Bois. I like to think the glittering sun and good air made him eat well; and the noise of the pounding surf gave him nights of sound sleep.

The interview with the Mayor of Perros-Guirec was pleasant, but without any conclusive result. Whereas M. Paranthoën had never heard of Swami Vivekananda or of the Ramakrishna movement, he appreciated the importance to the Swami's admirers of finding some trace of Swamiji's sojourn in Brittany. Also, it was to M. Paranthoën's own interest to aid in uncovering any connexion there might be between the town of which he was the Mayor and an important world personage.

Since the interview took place just before the time of the regular meeting of

the municipal counsel, several council members were present. These were, for the most part, men connected with the community all their lives. There was a good deal of discussion in animated French without, I was disappointed to find, any very constructive outcome. None of the persons present had as yet been born in 1900, and what old-timers they had known had mostly either died or moved away. Besides, the Mayor felt it was highly unlikely that there would have been much contact between the village people, quite provincial in 1900, and the, to them, exotic visitors from America, England, and India. We know from Frances Leggett that Joe MacLeod's French was quite defective and that Sara Bull probably spoke no French at all. Swamiji's knowledge of the language was at best rudimentary. I know of no evidence to indicate that Nivedita was French-speaking. What contact could there have been between these foreign birds of passage and the local populace?

A counsel member gave me the address of his aged mother, a Mme Symoneaux, who he thought might remember something. And the Mayor offered to contact the local *Notaire* to see if there were any legal documents extant relating to the rental of any house in the community in 1900. In answer to my inquiry, Mme Symoneaux replied that she had been twenty-one in 1900 and her mother had at that time owned two houses in Perros-Guirec; but she had no knowledge of any visitors such as I described, and 'also the other persons of my age have nearly all disappeared'. The Mayor reported to me the next day that the files of the *Notaire* contained nothing helpful. The simple renting of a house for several months would not have been recorded. M. Paranthoën felt our quest to be very difficult. There might well remain in Perros-Guirec

no tangible evidence at all relating to Swami Vivekananda's presence there.

I had asked the Mayor if there might be some local person possessing a collection of early pictures referring to Perros-Guirec. He gave me the name of a M. Pierre Delestre, who had a house in Perros-Guirec but lived most of the time in Paris. Back at Gretz I contacted M. Delestre. He proved to be a man of independent means and considerable culture, having a good deal of interest in the history of Brittany at the turn of the century. His grandfather, father, and uncle had been big property owners in Perros-Guirec, and it was apparent that he was also a man of considerable consequence in the area. Although to M. Delestre the name of Vivekananda meant nothing, he offered to help us in our search.

M. Delestre showed me many early photographs relating to the community, which helped me in identifying conditions as they existed in 1900—where was the centre of population, which roads existed then, which houses were then standing. Further, M. Delestre recommended that I scrutinize copies of *Le Lannionais*, a provincial newspaper of the period, for possible references to the foreign visitors. At the Bibliothèque Nationale I went through all the issues—now yellowed and fragile—of the four-page weekly, for the months of September and October, 1900. There was no reference to anything relative to our research, although there was much news on the Boxer Rebellion, the Boer War, and the approaching triumphal finale of the Exposition Universelle Internationale in Paris.

M. Delestre had offered to do some checking in Perros-Guirec, and this he did, through writing letters to official and other sources in the community. After two months, he phoned to say that most of his efforts had proved fruitless, but that

he had located an old man in Perros-Guirec who had some information possibly useful to us. M. Delestre was going for a short visit to Perros-Guirec and perhaps it might be worth my while to return to the village at the same time.

Thus, in late November, 1967, I found myself again in Brittany, in a Perros-Guirec very much changed from before, leafless, autumnal. Again I passed through the streets, studying houses now shuttered for the winter, looking through gates past frosty lawns, again asking: 'Which?' And this time, also: 'Swamiji, won't you yourself give us some clue to go on?'

On the afternoon of November 22, M. Delestre and I went to see M. Pierre Le Guyon at his home, Ker Glaz, 16 rue de Trestrignel. A shortish, stocky man of ninety-four, M. Le Guyon had lived in the community for the past seventy years. His profession had been road engineer. He appeared to be acute mentally, and his memory for names of old inhabitants was remarkable. But he showed signs of his age in that he had nearly lost the sight of his eyes.

What M. Le Guyon said was this. He remembered very well the presence of several strangers, he thought in the summer of 1901, who occupied a house in the same neighbourhood, owned by a family named Allain. This house was one of the first in the community to have been let. What interested him, as a bachelor of twenty-seven, was not the foreign visitors but two young maid-servants the woman who had taken the house had brought to help with the work. They were originally from Nice and were very pretty and lively. The young Le Guyon had talked to them often over the wall as he passed in front of the house on his way to work.

M. Le Guyon had witnessed something of the comings and goings of the other

occupants. The person who had taken the house was a most refined, distinguished lady who could have been American. She had hired locally a pony cart in which she herself in the afternoon often drove off in the direction of Louannec, a coastal village to the east. M. Le Guyon remembered another woman, whom he took to be the *gouvernante* (companion); and he recalled a foreign gentleman with a strange accent. The gentleman and the *gouvernante* often walked, in the afternoon, to the Pointe due Chateau—a rocky formation jutting out into the sea at the edge of the Plage de Trestrignel—where they spent much time in conversation. None of the people spoke much French.

M. Le Guyon described the foreign gentleman as being 'like me'—that is to say, stocky—'but taller'. He was about forty and had dark hair. He was dressed like a European, was *très gai* (lively, merry), always smiling, *élancé* (well-shaped, straight-built). The *gouvernante* was smaller and younger, extremely elegantly dressed, also *très gai*, showing much *amitié* (kindness).

I showed M. Le Guyon photos of Sara Bull, of Swamiji in 1900, and of Joe. I thought Joe might have been the person he took for the *gouvernante*, not because she was anything like a *gouvernante*; and she was not younger than Swamiji. But she was always dressed in the height of Parisian fashion and might certainly have spent much time walking and talking with Swamiji. Or perhaps it is more likely that the *gouvernante* was Nivedita. I showed M. Le Guyon pictures of her also. Holding the photos very close to his eyes and peering at them through his strong glasses, M. Le Guyon could only repeat, very much upset, '*Quel dommage*'—'What a pity'—because he could not see the likenesses well enough to be sure.

That evening M. Delestre and I went to

the Allain house, Villa St. Guirec, 11 rue de Trestrignel. It appeared to be a sizable stone house, on a corner, with two old stone cottages some distance away at the side. The property had a stone wall around it, and a garden connected the cottages with the main house. Across the road, beyond a small strip of land, was the water of the Bay of Perros in which is the port.

We were let into the house by a vigorous, ruddy-faced man having a full head of white hair, M. Ernest Allain. He apologized for the condition of the house and for the fact that there was no heat. He said he lived there all alone and wasn't much interested in comforts. Our conversation took place in what must have been the old living room. We sat around a big table, M. Delestre and I bundled up in our overcoats. As we talked, I stole glances at the antique furniture, quite disarranged, the collection of dusty bric-a-brac, the wallpaper peeling from the walls, wondering if this at last could be the house for which I had been searching.

M. Allain gave his age as seventy-five, which would have made him only eight years old in 1900. He was a bachelor. Like M. Le Guyon, M. Allain remembered the two maids from Nice, but not so much because they were pretty but because they had eaten tomatoes out of the hand like one eats a pear or an apple. This was something M. Allain had never seen before. Much of the balance of what he was able to recall he had heard from his mother.

The big house had been built in 1897 and thus was very up-to-date in 1900. The two cottages at the end of the garden were much older, the farther one probably about three hundred years old. It was true that this house had been one of the first to be let in Perros-Guirec; it had been his mother's custom to let the house every summer. Around the time of the

First World War, for several summers it had been rented to the Duc Decaze. He had brought so many servants that they had had to be put up in the houses all around the neighbourhood. M. Allain had heard tell of the foreign visitors and felt their arrival had been the year of the Exposition, not 1901 as M. Le Guyon thought. The visitors did not speak French. I showed M. Allain the photos and he looked at them carefully, but responded: 'What can I say? Older people don't interest a boy of eight.'

Perhaps, said M. Allain, there were letters to or from his mother, or old photos, that would help. There were all sorts of things in the house. But everything was so disorganized in the different rooms he hardly knew where to search. But perhaps he would have a look. In any case, I might come back and see the place again in the daylight.

The next day I returned to the Villa St. Guirec to look at the property carefully and to take pictures. The main house has eight rooms plus some service quarters, sufficiently large to have accommodated Sara Bull, Joe, Nivedita, Mrs. Melton, and the mysterious Mrs. Briggs; and perhaps the two domestics. It could be called 'pretty' and it certainly had a garden enclosed in walls—old granite walls with moss on the top and plants growing in the cracks between the stones.

The more recent of the two cottages in the garden had, in 1900, explained M. Allain, been only one story high and had consisted of two rooms, a large room with a big fireplace, and a smaller room. The rooms connected, and each had had a door leading directly into the garden. This, I speculated, could have been the cottage occupied by Swamiji and Jules Bois. (This building was rebuilt in 1902 or 1903, two of the exterior doors having

been changed to windows, and a second story added.) The older cottage, beyond, was where the family Allain stayed when the main house was leased.

There is, behind the small orchard at the back of the property, a decayed white bathhouse. M. Allain said that it was portable, and formerly had been transported each summer to Trestrignel beach to serve as a dressing room for bathers from Villa St. Guirec. But I saw no structure corresponding to what Nivedita referred to as her arbour-study. In response to my question as to this, M. Allain took me to see what appeared to be a sort of grotto, all grown up with vegetation, in which building materials were stored. Upon careful scrutiny I perceived that this grotto was the inside of a hollow stump of what had been an enormous tree. M. Allain said it had formerly been fitted out decently to serve as a little garden room. An amusing possibility opened up. The French word for 'tree' is *arbre*. What could be more literally termed an arbour-study than a habitable hollow tree?

The Allain property may be said to correspond to existent clues in some other respects. The Villa St. Guirec is in the old part of Perros-Guirec, near the port, closest to Lannion, directly on the old road from Lannion. It was one of the first first-class houses standing in Perros-Guirec in 1900. Most of the other residences there at that time were small cottages, without comforts, acceptable to local residents, but not suitable for discriminating travellers. The big construction trend was just beginning in 1900; the houses at the two places were built just after 1900. Finally, the orientation of the rue de Trestrignel is such that if Swamiji had stood in front of Villa St. Guirec to give his benediction to Nivedita as she started off in the peasant market-cart in the direction of Lannion, the early morning sun

of late September would indeed have been directly behind him.

We continued our inquiries with the help of other local people. I spent an evening with M. Armond Villeneuve, fifty-six. He is the grandson of a Mme Sononnes, who had operated the sole real-estate service in Perros-Guirec in 1900 and thus might have been the agent through whom Sara Bull rented the house. M. Villeneuve said no records helpful to us remained, but he suggested I interview a Mme Lemeur. This I did.

Mme Rose Lemeur lives in a small house called Ker Rose, at 3 rue des Sept Iles. She was born in Perros-Guirec in 1881 and has lived there all her life, never having travelled even to Paris. Her father and mother died when she was young, which events forced her to work from an early age, to support herself and her five brothers and sisters. At eighty-six she is alert, vigorous, and still a hard worker. By the time she was nineteen, in 1900, she had served for several years as a *voiturière*, a carter or delivery girl. Driving a horse and cart, she spent her days fetching merchandise from Lannion to Perros-Guirec, and making deliveries for local merchants to peoples' homes in Perros-Guirec.

Mme Lemeur said she had made several deliveries to the Allain cottage and had been impressed by the foreign gentleman who was staying there. Her description of him was that he was a *bel homme, bien poli*, a handsome man, very refined. He had greeted her in a friendly manner, with a few words in French, 'not bad, but not like we speak'. Although she had always addressed him as Monsieur, she had thought of him as, and in the neighbourhood he had been referred to as, *le pasteur*, that is to say, not a catholic priest but nevertheless a clergyman. He was dressed *en civil*, in ordinary European clothes.

Mme Lemeur has had cataract operations on both her eyes and wears heavy spectacles. I asked her if her sight was good enough to look at some photos. She replied that her eyes were sharper than those of most other people her age; for proof I had only to cast a glance at the state of her garden and her lodgment, which she keeps herself. It is true I had noticed the immaculate condition of both. Looking at photos of Swamiji, especially at that identified as having been taken in San Francisco in February of 1900, Mme Lemeur said she was sure it was the same person she had known as *le pasteur*.

On November 25, I returned to Gritz, not knowing whether we had succeeded or failed in our search for some trace of Swami Vivekananda in Brittany in 1900. I had listened to some fairly convincing accounts, had myself postulated some interesting circumstantial possibilities. But I had really discovered nothing tangible or conclusive at all. It was to be feared that the desire to please, advance knowledge of our search, and the natural elasticity of memories sixty-seven years old had quite possibly resulted in my finding what I wanted to find more than what had actually been the case.

Two things give me hope that we may yet achieve a result more precise. First, that M. Allain will find somewhere in his house a document or photo concretely linking his property with Sara Bull or Swamiji. And second, that the publicity our studies in Perros-Guirec has given to the problem may result in the appearance of evidence of a more satisfactory solidity. Two articles have been published in the provincial daily of Brittany, the *France-Ouest*, edited from Rennes, describing Swami Vivekananda, his importance to many people in India and the West, his known presence in Perros-Guirec in 1900, and our search. The entire community

has been alerted and may yet provide some truly credible evidence.

The other tangible thing we know about Swami Vivekananda's trip to the coast of France in 1900 is that he visited Mont-Saint-Michel. The certainty that he went there, and the sum-total of all that is known about what happened there, come from a single sentence in Sister Nivedita's *The Master as I Saw Him* :

'One of a party who visited Mont Saint Michael with him on Michaelmas Day 1900, and happened to stand next to him, looking at the dungeon-cages of mediaeval prisoners, was startled to hear him say, under his breath, "What a wonderful place for meditation!"'

This is all the historian of today has to go on in trying to examine Swamiji's visit to this splendid medieval monastery. Everything else must be hypothesized, based on a study of conditions as they existed at the Mont in 1900.

The rock that is the Archangel Michael's mountain has had religious associations for many centuries. This steep islet of granite a kilometre or two off the Normandy shore, surrounded by quicksand and tides running as high as fifteen metres (forty-five feet), often obscured by fogs, manifests an air of mystery. There is said to have been, before the coming of Christianity, a so-called pagan shrine there. Benedictine monks established themselves on the Mont in the tenth century and began to build what was to become one of the leading monasteries of Europe. The abbey was dedicated to the Archangel Michael, described in the Book of Revelation as the leader of the hosts of good against the forces of evil. Saint Michel has always been popular in France as a saviour from sin and a protector from harm. By the end of the thirteenth century an exquisite church had been constructed, together with handsome living, dining, and

working quarters for numerous monks, and facilities for receiving and entertaining pilgrims.

At the time of the wars with England the Mont was fortified; it withstood all efforts at seizure. During the wars of religion, the prosperity of the abbey declined, and the monks became less numerous. The Mont began to be used as a detention place for monks suspected of infidelity to the governing power, and for prisoners of state. Nivedita's use of the word 'mediaeval' is thus not quite correct, since the use of the abbey as a prison dates from just after the Middle Ages. Up to the mid-1800's the Mont continued to be used as a penitentiary; in the 1860's its restoration was begun. By 1900 Mont-Saint-Michel had become an important tourist attraction, as it is today. The *Guide Michelin* gives the Mont three stars—the highest rating—indicating the site merits a special trip.

That Swami Vivekananda visited Mont-Saint-Michel can be said to be significant. Of course, it is a great historical and architectural treasure. Perhaps Josephine MacLeod or Sara Bull, eager to view places of cultural interest, felt it should not be missed. The Mont was not distant from Perros-Guirec and conceivably could be visited on the way back to Paris. But one may believe that it was the religious associations that attracted Swamiji, and that he journeyed to Mont-Saint-Michel in the mood of a pilgrim, just as he had gone to so many pilgrim places in India. This supposition is reinforced by the fact that he chose to go there on an auspicious day, the annual feast of St. Michel, September 29. He had selected Christmas week to be in Rome in 1896.

During the age of faith in Europe, making pilgrimages to holy spots was a duty and a joy. A pilgrimage was both an act of devotion and a distraction from the

monotony of everyday life. A similar passion for making pilgrimages has existed, and exists today, in India. One goes to a place where a holy man has been born, or has taught, or has died, or where a particular manifestation of divine grace has occurred, in the hope that one may obtain there something to help one in one's present and future life. The anticipation felt in advance occupies one pleasantly, perhaps for years. The effort to go, the costs and dangers, build up the intensity of one's expectation. And at the place of pilgrimage, mingling with the other pilgrims, similarly charged with reverence and expectation, increases one's own longing. Indians believe that at pilgrim destinations some force, some spiritual potency, abides, available to those who journey there with faith.

Mont-Saint-Michel has long been one of the important goals of pilgrimage in France and indeed of all Europe. Its unusual situation adds to its attractions—a mysterious island defended by perils, often illuminated by storms and lightning. There was a saying current in medieval Europe: 'Before going to the Mont, make your will.' There were the usual dangers that beset the traveller in those days: false guides, highwaymen, army deserters desperate for money or food, bad roads, epidemics, local wars. One is reminded of the dangers faced, until modern times, by pilgrims going to Jagannath in Orissa, where numerous unbridged rivers often produced difficult conditions. Thus in Europe, as in India, for their own protection pilgrims often travelled in groups.

Legends grew up describing miracles which were supposed to have occurred at Mont-Saint-Michel, coloured and amplified when they reached, in that age of hearsay, people far away. The blind given sight, the crippled healed, prophecies uttered through the mouths of infants, solace

rendered for losses and sorrows. Farmers and shopkeepers rubbed shoulders with churchmen and kings, come to worship at Saint-Michel's sanctuary. The number of pilgrims was surprisingly large. The French author of *Le Mont-Saint-Michel*, Nicolas Goujon, cites these statistics: from the first of August, 1368, until July 25 of the following year, some seventeen thousand pilgrims were lodged in one of several charitable rest houses on the way to the Mont.

As the centuries passed, the pilgrims diminished in number; and when the abbey no longer housed monks but only prisoners, numbers dropped off further still. Those who did come simply visited the parish church in the village below the abbey. But since the 1860's, when the restoration commenced, the flow of pilgrims and tourists has resumed and has not been interrupted since. The abbey is now a national museum; but in recent years religious services have occasionally been held in the old monastery church.

This holy spot on the coast of France—could it have reminded Swami Vivekananda of the Kanya Kumari temple on the sea's edge at the southern tip of India? This rock, surrounded by water, may it have made him think of that last rock of his country where he had meditated only ten years before—then unknown, with his destiny before him, now a world figure admired by some of the most sophisticated people of the West, and with his work all but finished and life terminated?

If I have correctly postulated his movements, Swamiji travelled from Perros-Guirec to Mont-Saint-Michel on Friday the 28 or Saturday the 29 of September, 1900. In any case, he was at the Mont on the 29, possibly staying there the night before and/or the night of the 29, going on to Paris the next day.

From Perros-Guirec to Mont-Saint-

Michel is just under two hundred kilometres (one hundred and twenty miles), but going by train from the one to the other in 1900, as in 1967, was complicated. Then, as today, several changes were necessary. From Perros-Guirec one went by horse-drawn vehicle to Lannion, there to take the branch train to the Plouaret junction. At Plouaret one boarded a Brest-Paris express to St. Briec. Here again one changed, taking a train to Pontorson, which in 1900, as it is today, was the place where one got down for Mont-Saint-Michel. The station master at Pontorson told me that the railroad depot now at Pontorson was built around 1890; hence must be the same station at which Swamiji arrived and from which he departed. From Pontorson to Mont-Saint-Michel is nine kilometres, or six miles. In 1900 one made this final part of the journey by victoria or diligence (stage coach); today buses run frequently from Pontorson to Mont-Saint-Michel. In total, the trip from Perros-Guirec to Mont-Saint-Michel required five different vehicles and consumed the better part of a day. Going on to Paris, after visiting the Mont, Swamiji probably followed the same route one follows today—a train from Pontorson to Folligny, with a change there to another train arriving in Paris at the Montparnasse Station. Pontorson to Paris is four hundred and forty-five kilometres, or two hundred and seventy-five miles, and takes five or six hours.

There were in 1900, as there are today, hotels in Pontorson where the visitor to the Mont could stop. Or one could in 1900, as one can nowadays, stay at the Mont itself, in one of the inns in the little business settlement.

In 1875, to make it easy to reach Mont-Saint-Michel even at high tide, a causeway, with a road along it, was built from the land to the island. Thus, when Swamiji went, he was not required to brave the

perils of the sands and the sea. I had seen old pictures showing a small train arriving at the Mont, discharging passengers dressed much as people dressed in 1900, and had thought that Swamiji might have gone from Pontorson to the Mont on this branch train. But the *Guides Joanne* of 1902-1903 indicates that this train was not installed until 1902; thus it could not have been Swamiji's means for going from Pontorson to the Mont. A Museum guide told me that the train was discontinued by German military forces, who occupied the Mont after the fall of France in 1940. They had the tracks taken up to use as materials for constructing defences at nearby St. Malo, part of the Atlantic Wall.

The French *Baedeker* of 1893 lists two hotels at the Mont, but says getting a room at the Mont in summer and on holidays is difficult. The same is true today. On summer weekends, especially when a spectacularly high tide is expected, the isle is crowded with people. Now there are a number of inns, offering a total of some three hundred hotel rooms; but visitors are often forced to find sleeping space not only in Pontorson but at places even farther away.

I have speculated that Swamiji stayed at the Mont on the night of September 28 or the night of the 29 or possibly both nights. In Normandy, the end of September is late in the season, and although the 29 was the feast day of St. Michel and fell at the weekend, surely the big rush of summer was over. Old photographs show that a telegraph wire went to the Mont in 1900; thus room reservations could have been made and confirmed in advance. Nivedita uses the term 'one of a party who visited Mont Saint Michael with him... was startled...' Swamiji's companions probably were Sara Bull, Joe MacLeod, and Jules Bois. Either Sara Bull or Joe could later have related the incident or written of it to

Nivedita. Perhaps Sara Bull and Joe went back to Perros-Guirec from Mont-Saint-Michel, letting Jules Bois accompany Swamiji back to Paris. Swamiji stayed at the apartment of Bois both before and after the first trip to Brittany.

Old photos show that the entrance to the Mont in 1900 was very much as it is today. Vehicles are parked on the causeway, close to the round defence towers. A wooden ramp above the sand leads to the fortified entrance gate. Inside, one passes a second fortified portal, then enters the extremely narrow business street lined on both sides by lodging houses, restaurants, and souvenir shops. This one follows steeply up and around—passing the old parish church with its little cemetery perched on a rocky shelf—to the entrance of the abbey towering overhead. Old stories tell of the *crieurs*, or barkers, who stood in the doors of the shops, inviting in colourful language the pilgrims to enter and buy. The visitor of today must make his way past, or if he wishes accede to, the same inviting clamour. At last one mounts the splendid stairway leading to the monastery's entrance door. One enters a reception room, there to wait one's turn to be taken through the abbey on a guided tour.

If Swamiji stayed overnight at the Mont, he may have stayed at Mère Poulard's. The *Guides Joanne* of 1901 lists this as a leading hotel. Mother Poulard was a well-known personality at the Mont at the turn of the century. She had perfected a certain very delicate omelette which she herself cooked in a long-handled pan over a fire of oak logs in the dining room of her hotel. To eat at Mère Poulard's was one of the things one did at Mont-Saint-Michel. We may guess that the ladies insisted that Swamiji should eat there, whether the party stayed there or not. Mère Poulard's still exists, and the omelettes are still made in the old way, by a woman dressed in the

old fashioned apparel revealed in pictures of the founder. I requested the management to please let me consult the register of 1900, but received the reply that records from 1900 are not available.

Swamiji must have admired the dedication and the astonishing enterprise of the monks who constructed such a marvellous abode in such an inauspicious spot. Straddling the height of the rock is a whole monastery surrounding, at the highest point, an exquisite Gothic church. A statue of the Archangel, wings spread, flies from the top of the spire, one hundred and fifty metres (nearly five hundred feet) above the sea. The cloister, with its one hundred and twenty carved pillars, is considered to be the finest cloister built in the thirteenth century. The monks' refectory is lighted by three-score stained-glass windows. I did not discover the number who could be accommodated there, but I should estimate at least two hundred. Evidences of the reader's pulpit, at one end of the hall, remain. The pilgrims were taken care of in a vast pillared hall called the alms house, the same room where the tourist now waits to be taken through. The visitor of today is charmed and astonished; he asks himself how, considering the small population of Europe in the Middle Ages, the difficulties of the site, and the simplicity of the construction tools and methods available, such an architectural masterpiece could have been created.

And the dungeon-cage that Swamiji saw?

These portable cells, made of iron or wood bound in iron were not uncommon in France from the fifteenth to the eighteenth centuries. Louis XI confined several of his enemies in prison-cages. A journalist named Dubourg, having offended Louis XIV, was imprisoned in a cage at Mont-Saint-Michel, where it is said he perished, eaten by rats. We learn from

the book of Goujon that the cage at the Mont was about eight feet square, as well as about eight feet high. It was made of thick pieces of wood set close together and reinforced with iron. There was a hook at the top, from which the cage could be suspended—with the consequence that the cell was so unstable that the prisoner hardly dared to move. But the occupant of the suspended type of cage enjoyed the advantage of not being subjected to attacks of rats.

Goujon goes on to say that the old cage at Mont-Saint-Michel was destroyed in 1777 at the request of the children of the Duc d'Orléans. These youngsters were repelled to see, on a trip to the Mont, this instrument of torture from another age. One of the children, who personally took a hand in the demolition of the cage, eventually became King Louis-Philippe—who himself was to send many prisoners to the Mont some years later.

If the dungeon-cage was demolished in 1777, how could Swamiji have seen it in 1900? According to Museum personnel, after the restoration of the abbey, a replica of the old prison-cage was constructed and suspended in one of the rooms of the abbey, to interest and awe tourists. It must have been this replica that Swamiji saw. This prison-cage disappeared some years ago. But a replica of this original replica has been installed and can now be seen in the Historical Museum. It is made of wood, painted a dull iron black. In the top there is a hook by which the cell could be suspended. But because of the lowness of the Museum's ceiling, the cage rests on the floor.

'What a wonderful place for meditation!' is what Swami Vivekananda is reported to have said when he saw the cage. Literal suspension from the world, its demands, its sweets and sorrows. Action impossible, interruptions eluded, isolation

guaranteed. For one interested in living an inner life, solitary confinement could be but an opportunity for communion with the Self.

We don't know what the weather was like when Swamiji was at Mont-Saint-Michel in 1900. But the afternoon of September 28, 1967, was glorious. A hot sun shone, and the clouds that drifted in from the English Channel only added beauty. The woodlands and the rich Norman fields between Pontorson and the Mont still retained their look of summer. The apple orchards were heavy with shiny red fruit. Cows, white and chocolate-brown, lazed in the shelter of the tall hedge-rows. I walked the nine kilometres from Pontorson to Mont-Saint-Michel, watching the abbey rise before me ever higher and more grand, out of the sea. I thought of the pilgrim feet that had solidly touched, century after century, the same thoroughfare. I visualized Swamiji in horse-drawn carriage, trotting along the same road, perhaps enjoying something of the same sense of anticipation as I.

September 29, 1967, the feast day of St. Michel, was drizzly. And yet the crowds came. By bus and auto, by motor-scooter and bicycle, they crossed the causeway, parking before the watch-towers of the Mont. Flags flew from the ramparts. Policemen, trim and polite, their white gloves immaculate, directed traffic.

I visited the abbey, as Swamiji had done. In the old monastic church atop the rock, a mass was held, celebrated by a Cardinal and several Bishops. Mayors and other important figures of nearby towns occupied seats of honour. Behind them stood the pilgrims of 1967.

I think Swami Vivekananda must have visited, also, the old parish church below the abbey, among the restaurants and souvenir shops. I went there too. In the parish church on a special altar is a statue

of St. Michael, similar to the one above on the spire of the monastery church—a human-sized image plated with gold. A winged male figure, with a crown, wearing armour, the upraised right hand holding a sword to kill the dragon at his feet. In the left hand, a shield bearing the emblem, the Cross.

Behind me, several old women wait to make their confession. I hear the whisper of their voices in the confessional stall, and the low tones of the priest's responses. There are also three men waiting their turn, obviously labourers, dressed somberly in their best suits, looking solemn. Probably Spanish or Portugese; many foreign workers are brought in by a prosperous and labour-hungry France. In their solemnity, their awkwardness, their eagerness, I see a vision of the myriads of pilgrims of the past.

A few tourists enter, glance around, and leave. But the old women and the men wait. Then a very young priest, his face joyful, celebrates the mass, in the new way, facing the congregation. The women and the men go forward to take communion. 'Le corps du Christ,' the priest murmurs, as he gives to each kneeling before him the holy wafer. 'Le corps du Christ.'

I sit, watching and thinking, noting a message printed on a large card covered with cellophane, left in a pew near to me:

*Pèlerin de Saint-Michel
Prends et Lis*

Pilgrim to Mont-Saint-Michel [reads the text in translation] take and read this.

You who have come today to Mont-Saint-Michel, do you comprehend that you are walking in the steps of millions

of pilgrims who have come here before you, across the centuries?

It is here that, for ages, devotees have come to the shrine of Saint Michel to invoke his aid in conquering the demon and liberating their souls.

You also, you be a pilgrim and not just a tourist. Forget for a few minutes your itinerary and your car and the other sights of the Mont, and think of God. With a little effort like that your passage on earth will be enriched and your soul made glad.

In the age of faith the pilgrims made terrible efforts to get here, braving dangers of every sort. But when they reached the Mont they found the Lord. And there were the good worker monks to give them simple food and shelter and spiritual courage. And they found their effort rewarded.

You also, today, be a pilgrim.

You, also, be a pilgrim! That is what Swami Vivekananda was all his life, at Dakshineswar, at Kanya Kumari, at Mont-Saint-Michel. He taught us how to anticipate, how to yearn, as a pilgrim must. But at the same time Swamiji was, or has become, himself an object of pilgrimage. It was to find his traces, and to gain something from them, that had made me search evidences of his passage in Brittany and Normandy.

And I seem to see on the special altar at my side, not the winged figure of old, but Swamiji, like a new Archangel Michael. In his right hand, the sword of knowledge, destroying the dragon of modernism and scepticism and doubt. In his left hand, the shield of his devotion to his Great Master Sri Ramakrishna.

SISTER NIVEDITA: THE REBEL CHILD OF A GREAT MASTER

DR. SANAT KUMAR RAI CHOUDHURY

Swami Vivekananda entered into the West as a proud ambassador of India, a land thrown to the backyard of history, shorn of all glories of the past, suffering political and economic bondage with teeming millions facing grim poverty and starvation yet standing singularly in the bewildered world with her spiritual majesty. The pride and arrogance of the ruling race stood humbled down before the unknown young pilgrim, who carried the impression of more of a warrior out for a conquest rather than a resigned monk, the representative of the oldest of the living religions—the aggressive Hinduism. The impact of an imposing personality and the sublimity of the message delivered so eloquently by Vivekananda proved the fact that India was awake not only to survive but to conquer. The Western World thought that it was futile to send any more missionaries to India, rather the West needed more missionaries from India.

Europe was resting on a volcano, a blind impulse had possessed the militant nations heading towards the ruinous path of war and devastation. Common man lived in a state of agonizing strain and manifold disillusionment. They were fervently awaiting the hour of deliverance, to hear the still voice of the soul. The noble flame, carried by the pilgrim of the East, at once turned the eyes of the sick children, the tormented souls to the splendour of spirit. An ardent seeker of truth, a woman of heroic mould, a strong resolute fighter baptized in the freedom movement, throbbing with energy and impulsiveness, Margaret Noble was in a state of spiritual unrest, awaiting a new awakening. Just before Swami Vivekananda left England

on his way back to India, Miss Margaret Noble met the Swami on one Sunday afternoon in a West-end drawing room in London. She at once found in him, the appointed leader who was promised to lead her to light and liberty. 'When I addressed him as Master', as she wrote, 'I had recognized the heroic fibre of the man and desired to make myself the servant of his love for his own people. But it was his *character* to which I had thus done obeisance.'

'In my childhood, as it seems to me,' she had recorded in her diary (Monday, July 22, 1907), 'I was pushing on eagerly, along a narrow path to truth. At seventeen to twenty-one the idea of a certain truth, specifically and historically reliable, died in me. Still I sought truth with the same feverish and fanatical longing as before. At twenty-eight I met Swamiji—was gradually introduced into a large generalization.' The Master also found in his new discovery, a dedicated soul, the fit instrument to carry out the mission he held dearest, to work among the women-folk, nay, to fight for India's liberation and regeneration.

'Let me tell you frankly', wrote Swami Vivekananda to his new disciple having his high expectation of her in eloquent terms, 'that I am now convinced that you have a great future in the work for India. What was wanted was not a man, but a woman, a real lioness, to work for Indians, women specially.'

'India cannot yet produce great women, she must borrow them from other nations. Your education, sincerity, purity, immense love, determination and above all the Cel-

tic blood make you just the woman wanted....'

She warmly responded to the eloquent call of her Master. A new chapter was added to her life that so long lived in its own habitual surroundings. She was readily transformed into a new life, put in a new land and spiritual climate. Margaret Noble had a second birth in which she was reborn as Sister Nivedita, verily a life completely dedicated for the ideals her leader appointed her to perform, a name to be conjured and remembered with highest esteem and regard, a name so much associated with every field—political, cultural social—of India's reawakening. In a word, she was rightly acclaimed by Rabindranath Tagore, as *Loka Mātā*, the Mother of the people, bringing up her children to fulfil the promise of renaissance India.

Miss Margaret Noble, prior to her initiation by Swami Vivekananda, was an English to the core of her being, proud of her race, its deeds and its history. Soon after her acceptance of Vivekananda as her spiritual guide, she made a quiet and noble submission at the altar of her *Guru's* mission to preach unto mankind their divinity and to dedicate herself to the cause of India, the home of ancient wisdom. She gradually became more and more emotionally attached and devoted to India. She proudly claimed, 'India is the starting-point, and the goal, as far as I am concerned.'

Which image of India did Swami Vivekananda present to the world, particularly to his new disciple, Margaret Noble? India, to Swami Vivekananda, was not mere a geographical or political entity but the spiritual centre of the world-civilization.

'Indian thought stands revealed', as Sister Nivedita well-understood, 'in its entirety—no sect, but a synthesis, no church but a university of spiritual culture.'

India, being destined to be the centre of diverse culture and trends of civilization—both East and West—for millennium, cannot afford to remain aloof from world-current. She must come out of her narrow cell to the world at large and sweep over the Western continent not with bayonet and blood but deluge of spiritual current, so that the Westerners may recover their inner balance, resurrect the spirit they have crucified, swayed by craze for power and lust for possession. What he hoped, rather passionately believed, was that we should rediscover India's lost spiritual heritage to sustain us, nay, the rest of humanity, with its message of love and tolerance, sacrifice and renunciation, dispassion and soul-vision. On the other hand, Vivekananda was always out to fight root and branch the thickets of priestly theologies, soulless religious rites, irrational myths, blind superstition and social tyranny that have enslaved and degraded Indians to brute existence. Raja Ram Mohan Ray and Rabindranath Tagore, Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda—they never belong to India which is narrow and parochial, conservative and sectarian. They were loyal to India which carries and transmits the spiritual hopes and aspirations of the entire humanity. What Swami Vivekananda fought for was that the immense vitality and wonderful dynamism of West should be infused into Indian social life now withering away in *tāmasika* inertia so that India might rise again from her age-long slumber and make great strides in political, economic and social fields. Spiritualism would rest not in sickly, weak foundation but thrive in strong and stout hearts. The freedom of the soul would be realized not by running away from the world, but in the battlefield of life. Its impact would be felt in every pore of our being and its vital contact would invigorate all our life's movements,

quests and aspirations. 'What the world wants today', Swami Vivekananda most eloquently threw the challenge before the Western enlightened audience, 'is twenty men and women who can dare to stand in the street yonder, and say that they possess nothing but God. Who will go? Why should one fear? If this is true, what else could matter? If it is not true what do our lives matter?' This call for supreme self-dedication and sacrifice thundered by Vivekananda was never lost in wilderness. It drew hundreds of strong and resolute youths both from India and abroad of which Sister Nivedita stood foremost to make a grand liberation army in which all were dedicated to live and die for the well being of the humanity.

An ardent seeker after truth, a woman built in heroic mould, Nivedita warmly responded to the call of the Master and unhesitatingly jumped in the fray. This consecrating fire in which she was baptized never ceased; she carried the flame to the last breath of her life, to every corner she went, and inflamed every soul she encountered.

She became an ardent militant Indian nationalist deep-rooted in Indian cultural heritage yet pronouncing radical views on political and social spheres. She declared: 'I believe that the strength which spoke in the Vedas and Upanishads, in the making of religions and empires, in the learning of scholars and the meditation of the saints, is born once more amongst us, and its name today is Nationality. I believe that the present of India is deep-rooted in her past, and that before her shines a glorious future. O Nationality, come thou to me as joy or sorrow, as honour or as shame! Make me thine own!'

The paragraph just cited embodies the same spirit and strain once presented by her Master Swami Vivekananda. She inherited the mission of nation-building

from Swami Vivekananda. In a passage she wrote in 1903: 'The whole task now is to give the word "nationality" to India, in all its breadth and meaning. The rest will do itself. India must be obsessed by this great conception... It means new views of history, of customs, and it means the assimilation of the whole Ramakrishna-Vivekananda idea in religion, the synthesis of all religious ideas. It means a final understanding of the fact that the political process and the economic disaster are only side-issues—that the one essential fact is realization of its own nationality by the Nation.'

In later years, her penetrating insight presented us *The Web of Indian life* a rare book to be read and reread by us to know the secret fountain sustaining Indian society.

Swami Vivekananda wanted his new disciple to know that she was going to India not as a scion of the ruling race with an air of superiority, to teach the Christian ideal of charity like so-called missionaries and impress upon the poor ignorant natives the glamour of Western cultural advancement. She was called upon to accept the complete dedication to the Indian ideals and norms both in spirit and practice. Vivekananda felt that until Nivedita completely identified herself with India she could not serve India's cause.

'You have to set yourself', strenly Swami Vivekananda instructed his disciple, 'to Hinduize your thoughts, your needs, your conceptions, and your habits ... The method will come to you, if only you desire it sufficiently. But you have to forget your own past, and to cause it to be forgotten. You have to lose even its memory!' Nivedita with her unparalleled loyalty to her Master's words made a conscious and strenuous effort to leave her old world for the new. This change-over or radical transformation of her life that

took place was not at all smooth and easy but marked by inner conflicts, questionings and clashes yet ending in quiet submission and surrender to her Master's feet, which gradually effaced her old self and brought her reward of infinite peace, renewed strength and faith on the ideals chosen by her. Speaking of this period of inner struggle she says: 'My relation to our Master at this time can only be described as one of clash and conflict. I can see now how much there was to learn, and how short was the time for learning to be, and the first of lessons, doubtless, is the destroying of self-sufficiency in the mind of the taught. But I had been little prepared for that constant rebuke and attack upon all my most cherished prepossessions which was now my lot.'

Swami Vivekananda by his spiritual wisdom and impress of his giant personality installed in the heart of Nivedita the unquenched flame of *bodhi* or enlightenment, which helped her to recover inner calm and peace. Swami Vivekananda wanted that his disciple should endeavour to become a true and devoted Christian in the image of the apostle St. Augustine, which he deemed would in no way come in clash but stand in perfect accord with Hinduism. Swami Vivekananda represented that Hinduism which embodied all-inclusive ideal of universalism and unity pervading the Indian cultural heritage and the Indo-Aryan faiths, a unity based on the acceptance of all the spiritual and cultural legacies of the past. Swami Vivekananda's mission was to resurrect faith in spiritual heritage of India but not with the fanaticism of communal zealots, puffed up with vain ambition to convert rest of humanity under its banner or faith. He wanted to rouse all enslaved spirits, wherever they were, to the light of freedom and universal consciousness. Sister Nivedita was blessed enough to see the vision of India through

the eyes of her Master. Unshakable faith on Swami Vivekananda was the key-stone that helped Nivedita to unlock the mysterious door of India, enter into it and become deeply absorbed in meditating and adoring the image rest of her life. Sister Nivedita 'had won her access to the inmost heart of our society', as Rabindranath Tagore records his admiration in illustrating her pilgrimage to India, 'by her supreme gift of sympathy. She did not come to us with the impertinent curiosity of a visitor, nor did she elevate herself on a special high perch with the idea that a bird's eye view is truer than the human view—because of its superior aloofness. She lived our life and came to know us by becoming one of ourselves. She became so intimately familiar with our people that she had the rare opportunity of observing us unaware. As a race we have our special limitations and imperfections and for a foreigner it does not require a high degree of keen-sightedness to detect them. We know for certain that these defects did not escape Nivedita's observation but she did not stop there to generalize, as most other foreigners do. And because she had a comprehensive mind and extraordinary insight of love, she could see the creative ideals at work behind our social forms and discover our soul that has living connexion with its past and is marching towards its fulfilment.' It was not without reason that Rabindranath Tagore said, 'She was in fact a Mother of the people... I have seen that Sister Nivedita saw the common people, touched them, did not simply think of them mentally.'

Swami Vivekananda presented to his disciple and the Western world those living and bright aspects of India that was glorious as well as her naked grim face, the ragged poverty and ignorance of the teeming millions suffering from political and economic bondage and social conservatism.

Swami Vivekananda made no secret of the fact that her journey in India would be one of arduous climb facing manifold hazards.

Bestowing the great task on her, Swami Vivekananda wrote, 'Yet the difficulties are many. You cannot form any idea of the misery, the superstition and the slavery that are here. You will be in the midst of a mass of half-naked men and women, with quaint ideas of caste and isolation, shunning the white skin through fear or hatred and hated by them intensely. On the other hand, you will be looked upon by the white as a crank and everyone of your movements will be watched with suspicion.'

Margaret was reborn and transfigured into Nivedita, a life completely dedicated to the supreme cause of Truth, a spirit that would not falter in fear but would move forward to the battle front. 'If this is true', she said, 'what else could matter?' She came to India with her immense fund of love and sympathy. Whether standing beside a sick or dying patient in a plague stricken area with her compassionate heart or boldly accusing the British misrule in India in freedom struggle she was always a self-immolating martyr who cheerfully courted the ordeals that came in her way to serve the Indian people in their struggle for national regeneration, nay, work for their spiritual emancipation.

She was one of those pilgrims who could truly discover the very spiritual foundation of India's social structure and diverse culture. She found in dismay, like her Master, that, in one end, there prevailed a simple glorification of past without any serious and sincere effort to understand the significance of the glorious tradition and, on the other end, there was an utter disrespect for all that had been handed down from past and blind imitation of those superficial and appar-

ently glaring things that daze the eyes. Both trends are suicidal and sure signs of national degeneration. Indians, in this period of transition, were hovering between two worlds—the past was buried in oblivion and the present that was to be rebuilt. Let us hear what Sister Nivedita had said half a century back: 'The Indian mind has not reached out to conquer and possess its own land as its inalienable share and trust, in the world as a whole. It has been content, even in things modern, to take obediently whatever was given to it. And the newness and strangeness of the thing given has dazed it. The Indian people as a whole for the last two generations have been as men walking in a dream, without manhood, without power to react freely against conditions, without even commonsense.' India, if she only rests content with her contribution in the past without making further any attempt to renew herself with the changing world, would be mumified like ancient Egypt and Greece, Judea and Rome. Nivedita wrote: 'To give a religion to the world may be a sufficient proof that one's past was not in vain, but evidently it is no sort of safeguard for the future. . . . The orthodox is apt to tread the round of his own past eternally. The unorthodox is as apt to harness himself to the foreign present, with an equal blindness. In suicidal desperation, the would-be patriotic reiterate the war cries of antagonistic sects, or moan for the advent of a new religion, as if, by introducing a fifth element of discord, the Indian peoples could reach unity. Nor does the education at present offered promise any solution of the problem.' What was needed was the happy fusion and harmonious blending of the East and West as well as the past and present. 'Our task', clearly Nivedita outlined, 'is to translate ancient knowledge into modern equivalents. We

have to clothe the old strength in a new form. The new form without that old strength is nothing but a mockery, almost equally foolish is the savage anachronism of an old-time power without fit expression. Spiritually, intellectually, there is no undertaking, but we must attempt it.'

Firm and resolute, she, inspired by her Master, cheerfully courted the ordeals that came in the way to serve those lowly, distressed and down-trodden to stand beside them in the hour of trial to relieve their pain and agony and to rouse their innate divinity and manliness from the state of stupor, utter degradation and poverty. She felt that Indian youths should not be misled by the glamour of the Western civilization but should look back to find fund of immense inspiration from their own spiritual reservoir. Sister Nivedita therefore said: 'Indian students will do most to help the growth of knowledge, if they begin (the study of India's history) with the robust conviction that in the long tale of the motherland there can be nothing to cause them anything but pride and reverence.'

Nationalism, she was right to recognize, cannot be imposed from without but, like spiritualism, must grow from within. For this growth, there must be sincere endeavour to rediscover the essentials on which the fabric of nation rests, reading of the chief currents that vitalize the national life in its various walks. She learnt from her Master that new ideals were to be sought after through the old without destroying it but through its assimilation and integration.

Swami Vivekananda presented before Nivedita rather the entire humanity. 'My ideal indeed can be put into a few words and that is: to preach unto mankind their divinity, and how to make it manifest in every movement of life...

'One idea that I see clear as daylight is that misery is caused by ignorance and nothing else. Who will give the world light? Sacrifice in the past has been the Law, it will be, alas, for ages to come. The earth's bravest and best will have to sacrifice themselves for the good of many, for the welfare of all. Buddhas by the hundred are necessary with eternal love and pity.

'Religions of the world have become lifeless mockeries. What the world wants is character. The world is in need of those whose life is one burning love, selfless. That love will make every word tell like thunderbolt.

'It is no superstition with you, I am sure, you have the making in you of a world-mover, and others will also come. Bold words and bolder deeds are what we want. Awake, awake, great one! The world is burning with misery. Can you sleep? Let us call and call till the sleeping gods awake, till the god within answers to the call. What more is in life? What greater work? The details come to me as I go. I never make plans. Plans grow and work themselves. I only say awake, awake!'

The eloquent call stirred the soul of the lioness who came forward like hundred other valiant souls—to follow the command of the great leader and to march for the liberation of their own selves and the welfare of the world—'*Ātmano mokṣārtham jagaddhitāya ca*'. She became the true interpreter of her Master's ideas, a bridge between him and that countless host of his own people, nay, the rest of the world. Sister Nivedita's dedication also evoked the Master's heart-felt blessing:

The mother's heart, the hero's will,
The sweetness of the southern breeze,
The sacred charm and strength that dwell,
On Aryan altars, flaming, free;

All these be yours and many more
No ancient soul could dream before—
Be thou to India's future son

The mistress, servant, friend in one. Swami Vivekananda felt that the so-called political reformers and agitators were crying in the wilderness or living in an ivory tower without going to the masses and rousing them from age-long slumber and utter helplessness. 'The uplift of the women the awakening of the masses' he affirmed, 'must come first, and then only can any real good come about for the country, for India.' The heroic disciple came forward to shoulder the gigantic task entrusted to her by the Master and started with a small institution in an obscure corner of Calcutta for girls, which had a great impact on the awakening of the women. As regards the ideal of Indian womanhood, she always pointed out the divine life of Holy Mother, Sri Sarada Devi who 'is Sri Ramakrishna's final word as to the ideal of Indian womanhood'. Sister Nivedita could not, of course, in later years remain confined to four walls of a girls' institution but a larger field and larger world demanded her leadership. In a letter, few years after Swami Vivekananda's passing away, Sister Nivedita wrote to Miss MacLeod giving vent to her feelings:

'We talk of "woman-making". But the great stream of the Oriental woman's life flows on. Who am I that I should in any way seek to change it? Suppose even I could add my impress to ten or twelve girls, would it be so much gain? Is it not rather by taking the national consciousness of the women like that of the men and setting it towards greater problems and responsibilities that one can help? ... I don't know. This may be all my own sophistry, I cannot tell. Only I think my task is to awake the nation, not to influence a few women.' From this letter

it would be manifested that she was expanding her frontier from the emancipation of the women to the freedom of the nation. In nation-building activities comprehending every sphere of national life, in her ceaseless struggle for the emancipation of the people, in self-immolation and martyrdom, she became a worthy disciple of the great Master, stout champion of his noble cause.

Few months before his final departure Swami Vivekananda blessed her in glorious terms: 'May all powers come unto you! May Mother Herself be your hands and mind! It is immense power—irresistible—that I pray for you, and, if possible, along with it infinite peace ... If there was any truth in Sri Ramakrishna, may He take you into His leading, even as He did me, nay, a thousand times more!' She proved her mettle and heroic mould of her being unto the last of her earthly journey. She was, in other words, one of the finest commentaries of Swami Vivekananda's philosophy. Her great treatise, *The Master as I saw Him*, the book written by the blood of her heart, has given to the world the most glowing and significant picture of the spiritual fellowship of a great Master and his disciple.

Spirituality or enlightenment must come from within. Each must strive for himself to discover and know his true self. Swami Vivekananda, a perfect gardener as he was, did not attempt to trim the flowers in his own pet design but let every flower grow according to its innate power and charm. True to his greatness as a teacher, he tried to train Nivedita in her own way. As once the Buddha blessed his disciples that they must lit their torch and move forward without fear and without care like a rhinoceros, Swami Vivekananda gave Nivedita freedom to carve out her own path. 'Go forth into the world, and there if I made you, be destroyed! If

Mother made you live !' Yet he came out and stood beside her in every moment of trial and spiritual despair. 'I will stand by you unto death whether you work for India or not, whether you give up Vedānta or remain in it.' This bold and grand assurance from her Master had been the beacon light that carried her triumphantly through the remaining phases of her struggling life.

She was no more the distrusted British woman that she had been before in the eyes of the sensitive Indians, but one of their own, a beloved Sister, a fellow worker, a most trusted and admired leader or the 'Mother of the people' as called by the poet Rabindranath Tagore. She was completely dedicated, *Nivedita* or dedicated in letter and spirit, to the service of the Indian people. The great jurist and national leader, Dr. Rashbehari Ghosh paying his homage to the memory of Sister Nivedita about her contribution to Indian awakening said: 'If the dry bones are beginning to stir, it is because Sister Nivedita breathed the breath of life into them. . . . If we are conscious of a budding national life at the present day it is in no small measure due to the teaching of Sister Nivedita.'

Sister Nivedita drank deep of the perennial waters of Hinduism whose beatific vision she lately saw was not unlike that of Dante's Empyrean; only it is to be relegated to no distant future but triumphantly vindicated here and now, in earth-life or never. Advaita Vedānta is the bed-rock of Hinduism. Swami Vivekananda's life-mission was to transform the abstract Advaita to become living ideal in every day life. The Advaita conception of Māyā, far from preaching passive withdrawal from the world—a vain escapism, rather boldly emphasizes its positive aspect to realize one and undifferentiated Brahman in each and every part of the life and universe.

The Advaita realization alone can rouse the potential divinity within us and make us strong, fearless, steady and pure. Sister Nivedita took the central thread of Vedānta as the guiding principle of life and fully understood its all-comprehensive nature when she said, 'Advaita can be expressed in machines, in engineering, in art, in letters as well as in philosophy and meditation. But it can never be expressed in half-measures. The true Advaitin is the master of the world. . . . In the little he sees the great.'

In same strain she said that 'Religion is not confined to *sādhana*s. *Tapasyā* is not a matter of the *thākur-ghar* alone.' It must be infused by robust idealism and supplemented by ceaseless activities. 'Work then is as necessary to the growth of the soul as is the Vedānta: perhaps more so. And work is at all times within our own power. The *bhakta* practises the ceremonies of worship. Work is the *pūjā* which a man offers to that Great Power which is manifested as Nature.' This *Karma-Yoga* enunciated by the *Gītā* was upheld by Swami Vivekananda in fullest measure and taken by Sister Nivedita as the only mode of spiritual life. The secret of work as a spiritual *sādhana* lies when work is done disinterestedly and dedicated to the large interest of the humanity.

Sister Nivedita carried the flame as bestowed by her great Master to fight for nation-building, identifying herself more and more in every aspect with Indian people in their struggle for political and social freedom, nay, spiritual emancipation. She was verily the Mother of the people. She touched every fibre and chord of Indian life, nurturing the creative impulses of the then young scholar, Dr. Jagadish Chandra Bose flowering into a full-grown scientist, inspiring the artists like Abanindra Nath Tagore, Nandalal Bose to revive the glory of Indian art, impressing

upon Rabindranath Tagore, Ramesh Chandra Dutt, G. K. Gokhale and others with the fire of nationalism, and above all fervently and actively associating with Sri Aurobindo Ghosh, Bhupendranath Dutta, Barin Ghosh and other revolutionists in their struggle for India's freedom. She was often misunderstood for her militant nationalism, fiery political activities or somewhere for her aggressive Hinduism, but everywhere she stood firm in her determination, crusading zeal, integrity, sacrifice, uncompromizing with the world which stood on power and naked violence, impatient with the people who helplessly yielded to abject surrender without hard resistance. In all her struggles, she left

anchorage to spiritualism—the central fire that had warmed up and illumined her being and manifold activities. She loved India—Indian people from the core of her heart, dedicated her life to rouse the nation to activity and glory and make it move towards light and liberty. Hers was a burning passion for a nobler, purer life, a higher form of humanity and a new world, free and divine, whose dreams she dreamt till the last moment of her earthly life. The last words she uttered were: 'The frail boat is sinking but I shall yet see the sunrise.' Her dedicated life, which is an invincible tower built on faith, would inspire the future humanity for ages to come.

A GUIDING LIGHT FOR TROUBLED TIMES

SWAMI SASTRANANDA

CHANGE—THE LAW OF NATURE

This world of ours is passing through a period of transition; it is indeed in the melting pot of change. Hot currents of change—political and economic, social and religious—course wildly, now here, now there, sometimes all over. And India seems to be one of the 'storm-centres'.

We are in the midst of tremendous changes, whether we like it or not, whether we want it or not, whether we accept it or not—changes which are obviously challenging, straining, bending and even breaking the structure of the older order. Change is the law of nature. Certain changes are natural, just and inevitable; we cannot resist them, and if we try to resist, it shall be in vain. Certain other changes are artificial, forced, unnecessary and harmful; to yield to such is to court destruction and disaster.

Confronted with an untidy upheaval and a turbulent transition, different people react differently. The majority grumble and complain, become nervous and frightened. Quite a few are overpowered by pessimism and a resigned passivity. Only a few think calmly and clearly, face the issues boldly, learn from the past and strive for a better future. A rare few succeed in the task and leave the impress of their personality on their times, on history. Swami Vivekananda was pre-eminently one such.

We see today, right in our midst, before our very eyes—and if we look carefully right within ourselves—prophets of doom and despair, chanting an endless refrain of disapproval and dismay: 'Honesty and truth, hard work and spirit of service, respect and reverence—all ethical and spiritual qualities are going out of life. What

will happen to us? This is the end of the world !'

RIGHT ATTITUDE TOWARDS AN EMERGING NEW ORDER

True, the times are certainly not very pleasant and peaceful. It may even be the end of the world in one sense—the end of *one* world but the beginning of another. The processes of birth and rebirth are usually attended with pain and suffering; we can only minimize them. But, if the handling is proper, then there is the rewarding joy of a new, healthy and vigorous life emerging forth. Old order must change, giving place to the new. The change itself may be peaceful, orderly and evolutionary; or violent, disorderly and destructive. India has stressed the former approach.

Harmony and synthesis, peaceful evolution and constructive assimilation—these constitute the basic elements of Indian culture, characterize the Indian genius. On our part, we—the sons and daughters of Mother India—must seek to be constantly guided by these elements and strive to shape our thoughts and feelings, words and deeds accordingly. This is all the more necessary in the present context, when we are required to participate fruitfully in task of reconstruction and work out practical solutions. It won't do to slip into fearful despair or to negatively stand aside, chanting continually the chorus of condemnation.

LIGHT FROM SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

For those who are ready to put their shoulders to this task, there is readily available one refreshing, encouraging and inspiring source of hope, light and strength—the prophetic words, the life-giving message of Swami Vivekananda. All those which he expressed more than seventy years ago are as relevant and valuable now as they were then: perhaps more so.

It is necessary, nay indispensable, for our survival and progress, that we earnestly heed his words—words of assurance as well as warning. This is vitally necessary for our youth, who have yet the major part of active life before them; and it is they who have to bear the brunt of work needed for shaping the destinies of a nation, of which they themselves are individual units.

Seeing the present-day depressing state of affairs in our country and troubled by grave misgivings as to its future, nay even its very existence as an integrated unit, some people may question the validity of Swami Vivekananda's utterances relating to, and visions of, a glorious India:

'Only the blind cannot see, or the perverted will not see, that she is awakening, this motherland of ours, from her deep long sleep. None can resist her any more; never is she going to sleep any more; no outward powers can hold her back any more, for the infinite giant is rising to her feet.' (*The Complete Work*, Vol. III, pp. 145-146)

'I do not see into the future; nor do I care to see. But one vision I see clear as life before me, that the ancient Mother has awakened once more, sitting on Her throne—rejuvenated, more glorious than ever.' (*Letters*, p. 201)

'From the date that the Ramakrishna Incarnation was born, has sprung the *Satya-Yuga* (Golden Age). ...' (*ibid.*, p. 239)

They may say that his utterances and vision do not seem to square up with the present-day reality. If that is a fact, and if Swami Vivekananda has erred in this regard, how can we have faith in his other statements?

RIGHT UNDERSTANDING OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA'S MESSAGE

While Swami Vivekananda obviously did

not care to play the role of a professional prophet or soothsayer, his spontaneous utterances regarding the shape of things to come have proved true. One has only to read what he has said about the materialistic civilization of Europe and the great wars, about the resurgence of China and the rising up of the working classes, to become convinced about the depth of his thinking and foresight. So his utterances regarding the awakening of India and its glorious future also are no less valid. They only need to be understood in the proper light, and not merely in our own preconceived and past-inhibited ways of thinking.

Mother India's glorious awakening and revival need not necessarily mean an instant and dramatic realization of political and military glory, of an abundance of wealth and luxury—a heavenly spectacle all round of song and dance and festivity. In essence, it is the awakening and rejuvenation of her children—the people of India—the vast majority of whom consist of the poor, starving, half-dead masses. Now life and light are coming to them. Due to a variety of circumstances, man-made or providential, planned or accidental, they are awakening; the 'dumb millions' are beginning to find their voice—though unfortunately the effects of awakening and the exercise of their new-found voice may not look and sound very pretty. Much of the ugly shape of the happenings we witness can be ascribed to the first exercisings—awkward and misguided sometimes—of their new-found life and liberty. Let us not become unduly perturbed on that account; let us rather rejoice. No nation can survive, much less progress, in the long run, without the masses of people, who form the backbone of the nation, being alive and awakened, healthy and strong.

THE NEED OF THE DAY

It is undoubtedly and unfortunately

true that some short-sighted and short-tempered fanatics misread the situation and misuse it, exploit it for pursuing misguided goals and interests.

Our duty should be to understand the situation in its proper historic, social, human and spiritual perspective and heartily co-operate in advancing the true welfare of our less fortunate countrymen. We have to co-operate even if it entails quite an amount of sacrifice on the material plane. Political unrest and social disorder are bound to make us suffer losses. Then why not voluntarily sacrifice or renounce, for the sake of a general good—which of course includes our own? *Sannimitte varam tyāgaḥ vināśe niyate sati*. To view the situation in this light and work for the uplift and welfare of all, each in our own small way—but that unfailingly—that is the inevitable need of the day.

VALUE OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA'S MESSAGE

And in this matter again, Swami Vivekananda can be the great light giving us the right guidance—particularly because of the fact that there could be no better, safer and truer champion of the 'masses', none who dedicated himself more than he in thought, word and deed, for advancing their cause and welfare. Even his visit to the West originated primarily for their sake. But he was not a partisan fanatic, sowing seeds of class-hatred, advocating the cause of one set of people at the cost of another's. His vision, heart and striving encompassed the advancement and true welfare of all. As such, the path he has shown for the purpose and the gems of practical wisdom he has bequeathed to us in the various contexts of his speeches and writings, constitute our precious asset and a great source of enlightened power. Our youth should by all means study his works carefully and reflectively, particularly his *Lectures from Colombo to Almora* and

Letters and the compilation *Swami Vivekananda on India and Her Problems*. There is enough wisdom, nourishment and guidance there for those who want to develop a worthy character and render fruitful service to their countrymen. Along with that it would be good and necessary to keep in mind certain truths and certain attitudes needed for guiding us, as we proceed to work in a discouraging yet challenging atmosphere.

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA'S 'SOCIALISM'

Peace, prosperity, freedom or happiness—in this world—cannot be long enjoyed in isolation. 'Sharing' with others is the law of life; it is a 'must'. Greed and selfish acquisition negate life. So some kind of 'socialism', common sharing, is necessary and inevitable. It should, however, be of the healthy and voluntary kind, not coerced. Swami Vivekananda, while making it clear that manipulations in the physical world, however clever, could not lead to an ultimate solution of human problems, advocated socialism of the 'leveling-up' variety, and not that of the 'leveling-down' variety. Unfortunately, we see that many misguided fanatics more readily take to the 'levelling-down' type. Swami Vivekananda's 'socialism' does not require pulling down those at the top and equalizing them with those at the bottom, but helping the least and the lowest to rise higher and higher till all were equal at the 'top'.

So, whether it concerns wealth or possessions, social position or educational opportunities, the temptation to pull down and equalize, the temptation to seek hasty short-cuts, must be resisted. And an honest, intense desire to uplift others to the 'top' must be backed up by appropriate action, 'calm, silent and steady work'. A prime necessity is to discourage jealousy towards those who are better-placed and

more gifted than ourselves, and the reprehensible attitude of grabbing others' honest earnings, through force or political scheming and legal tricks.

It should be remembered that only what we have honestly worked for and deserved belongs to us; and what does not thus belong to us—possessions, prestige, power or popularity—we can never truly enjoy.

BLESSED ARE THE 'UNITY-MAKERS'

Unity is the law of life, the basis of science and philosophy, and the conscious or unconscious goal of all social, political and religious endeavours. Blessed are those whose thoughts, deeds and words constantly flow towards promoting such unity. But those who seek to undermine and break-up such unity, be it in the smaller domestic family or in the larger human family, in society or in nature—such will themselves break up eventually; fitting retribution shall visit them who consciously and deliberately engineer disunity and division, disorder and disintegration.

The destroyers of unity are the enemies of life and of society, and are to be countered energetically—by spiritual and moral sanctions on the part of individuals, by social disapproval and sanctions on the part of the community, and punitive measures by the legally constituted authority of the state. Even in such a confrontation, a patient, enlightened and constructive approach is necessary. The tendency to take law into one's own hands and deal out mob-justice should be totally checked.

Equality and *Reciprocity* are the warp and woof of the social fabric, the basis of social equilibrium and progress. Unless we are sincerely prepared to treat others on a basis of equality and dignity, to do unto them as we would like them to do unto us, unless we are prepared to allow others the freedom in various contexts as

we would demand for ourselves, no lasting peace or progress is possible.

PATH TO GREATNESS

We should be sufficiently alive to the fact that great structures are built up of small bricks, and great destinies are forged out of simple thoughts and actions. We must not fail to bestow sufficient care, attention and regard on the so-called 'small' things and issues in life. It requires men of character to devote themselves to the proper discharge of the 'small' duties and man 'small' stations. We need truly 'big' people for that. We need more big men in small places ; unfortunately we have too many small men in big places.

There is no doubt a tremendous need on our part to be creative, to think deeply and freely, to criticize, to protest against and fight injustice. We must exercise that right, not just to serve self-interest only, but to ensure the larger welfare of society as a whole. The exercise of our individual freedom and the right to criticize and protest must be tempered by a sense of responsibility and restraint and a constructive approach. What we do should contribute to a larger dimension of unity, and not the reverse.

CHARACTER—THE PRIME NEED ; ITS SPIRITUAL BASIS

All this demands in the persons con-

cerned, in some measure, the qualities of honesty and dependability, intelligent understanding and a sense of proportion, of cheerful patience and loving regard for others. They should not be merely occasional, 'fairweather' virtues, but constant elements of one's character. And such a character must be developed through a disciplined life, through spiritual practices, in the form of reflective study and reverent service, whole-hearted prayer and meditation.

It is high time we all realized—specially our young people—that spiritual disciplines definitely help us to recognize, realize and express the divinity in the human soul, and get established in our higher Self. It is our higher Self, the *Ātman* which is the great focus and fountainhead of all virtues—of strength, wisdom and joy, the only unfailing and ultimate medium of deep communication, communion and identification with our fellow-beings. May that Divine Self manifest in all of us more and more. And may we not ignore Swamiji's prophetic warning :

'Religion and religion alone is the life of India, and when that goes India will die, in spite of politics, in spite of social reforms, in spite of *Kubera's* wealth poured upon the head of every one of her children.'

'For a century in new India Unity has been the target for the arrows of all archers. Fiery personalities throughout this century have sprung from her sacred earth, a veritable Ganges of people and thought. . . . From this magnificent procession of spiritual heroes . . . I have chosen two men, who have won my regard because with incomparable charm and power they have realized this splendid symphony of the Universal Soul. They are, if one may say so, its Mozart and its Beethoven—*Pater Seraphicus* and Jove the Thunderer—Ramakrishna and Vivekananda.'

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

(A MUSICAL BIOGRAPHY)

TEXT BY ALICE COOK AND ERIK JOHNS : MUSIC BY JOHN SCHLENCK

[We are enclosing the text of a work specially composed and performed by members of the Vedanta Society of New York for the occasion of the Sixth Annual Swami Vivekananda Festival held by the Society on July 4th, 1967.

The composition is written for men's chorus, two speakers and accompanying instrumental ensemble. It is divided into four sections, as the following :

- i. Youth, discipleship, days as a wandering monk
- ii. The Mission to the West
- iii. The Mission to the East
- iv. Training of disciples, and attaining *Mahāsamādhi*.

The musical side of the work combines Western with Indian elements. Each movement is set in an appropriate *rāga*, but harmony and counterpoint are used according to the Western method. The accompanying instruments are violin, *tāṇpurā*, *tablā*, gong, cymbals and harpsichord.

The passages for the second speaker are quotations from Swami Vivekananda—Ed.]

PART ONE

Full Chorus : From the realm of the Absolute he came,
And was born into the land of saints and sages,
Into the holy land of Kṛṣṇa and Buddha and Śaṅkara—
Narendra Nath, born in the holy hour of the dawn.

Small Chorus : Child of wonderment, eager, joyous,
Child ever striving toward the heights,
Filled with holy yearning,
Yet filled with tumult, beset by doubt,
Searching for truth with burning passion—
Striving, yearning, doubting, searching,
He came to the feet of Ramakrishna
And was touched by the spark of Ramakrishna.

Full Chorus : He was greatly loved of Ramakrishna,
Yet surrender to the Master did not come at once.
Strong of will was he,
Full of spirit and of youth,
Proud, defiant, confident ;

Small Chorus : But the Master knew
That there would grow within him
Tenderness and divine pity
For the sorrows and sufferings of mankind.
Touched by the spark of Ramakrishna,
Blessed and enlightened by his grace,
Narendra Nath evolved until he knew beyond all doubt
That here his future lay :

- And gave himself completely
To that living symbol of divine love.
- Full Chorus :** Entirely did the Master trust him,
Guided and illumined him.
And at last bestowed upon him
The full blaze of his divine glory.
- First Speaker :** Then the Master left the world.
There was a deep void ;
And Narendra went forth as a homeless monk,
Wandering north and south, east and west, in his native land ,
And he took the name of Vivekananda.
As he walked from village to village,
In the mountains and by the rivers,
The seeds implanted by his Master grew,
And his eyes were opened :
He saw and loved the poor and the lowly,
He beheld their simple adoration
And perceived the depth of their sacred devotion ;
But they were suffering, oppressed, and enslaved,
And his heart went out to them.
He longed to raise and save and free them
That they might claim their peerless heritage.
Deep in meditation and prayer
He became aware of the great power of compassion
That welled forth within him.
The mission of his life was clear :
Revive the ancient greatness of the motherland
And give that greatness to the world.
- Full Chorus :** Then he heard the call resounding,
The call from far-away America
To attend a Parliament of Religions
In India's name, with India's message.
- Small Chorus :** The sons of India entreated him to go,
And he deeply wished to bring
Aid to his brothers in need ;
Yet once more struggle with doubt overwhelmed him—
Not for two thousand years
Had a monk gone forth from the East
To meet the West where all was strange.
With all his heart he prayed for guidance :
Where did his duty lie ?
- Full Chorus :** Then Ramakrishna came in a vision and pointed to the sea,
And Vivekananda knew that he must go.
Blessed and confident, he left his native land
And sailed toward the West.

PART TWO

- Full Chorus : Unheralded he arrived in America,
 Unknown, unheralded, alone in a strange land—
 But the spark had burst into flame as it blazed across the
 continent,
 Flame of the divine to enlighten all mankind.
 And so he came to the Parliament of Religions :
 There he stood, tall and straight and proud,
 Proud of the glorious heritage which he carried with him,
 Yet humble, serving the lowliest man because he saw God
 within him.
 He called his listeners 'Sisters and Brothers of America'.
 And he said to them :
- Second Speaker : 'I do not come to convert you to a new belief. I want you to
 keep your own belief, I want to teach you to live the truth,
 to reveal the light within your own soul.'
- Full Chorus : And he said to them :
- Second Speaker : 'I accept all religions that were in the past, and worship
 them all ; I worship God with every one of them,
 in whatever form they worship Him. I shall go to the
 mosque of the Mohammedan ; I shall enter the Christ an's
 church and kneel before the crucifix ; I shall enter the
 Buddhist temple, where I shall take refuge in Buddha and
 in his law ; I shall go into the forest and sit down in medita-
 tion with the Hindu who is trying to see the light which
 enlightens the heart of everyone.'
- Full Chorus : And he said to them :
- Second Speaker : 'All is within. The divinity which we are seeking in heaven,
 in teachers, in temples, is within us.... Faith—faith—faith
 in ourselves, faith in God—this is the secret of greatness.'
- Full Chorus : Silence lay upon the hall...
 And he said to them :
- Second Speaker : 'Ye are the children of God, the sharers of immortal bliss,
 holy and perfect beings. Ye divinities on earth—sinners? It
 is a sin to call a man so ; it is a standing libel on human
 nature. Come up, O Lions, and shake off the delusion that
 you are sheep. Ye are not matter, ye are not bodies, ye are
 souls immortal, spirits free, blest and eternal.'
- Full Chorus : The hall rang with applause.
 From that hour he belonged to the world—
 Acclaimed by that vast and brilliant assemblage
 As the pioneer of a new age,
 An age of new understanding,
 Of new insight.
 He had made them see

That all were striving,
All were reaching for the same God.

Small Chorus : But there were some who saw more profoundly : they saw
A prophet, illumined and powerful,
And they followed him

And sat at his feet and pondered his teachings.

For he showed a more divine, a more noble practical life.

He did not argue, but lifted men from where they stood.

Solo : He went among the people, blessing them, uplifting them,
Transmitting sparks of the holy flame that he carried.

Small Chorus : He went among the people, blessing them, uplifting them,
Transmitting sparks of the holy flame that he carried.

Full Chorus : And there came many others, seekers of Truth,
Those not content with the old teachings in the modern world,
And they questioned him :

First Speaker : 'What of Truth ?'

Full Chorus : And he said to them :

Second Speaker : 'I found Truth because I had it in my heart already. Do not
imagine that you will find it in one creed or another creed.
It is within you. Your creed will not give it to you ; you
must give it to your creed.'

Full Chorus : And they asked :

First Speaker : 'What of civilization ?'

Full Chorus : And he said to them :

Second Speaker : 'True civilization is the manifestation of the divinity within,
and that land is the most civilized wherein the highest ideals
are made practical. Truth does not pay homage to any
society ; society has to pay homage to Truth or die.'

Full Chorus : And they questioned :

First Speaker : 'What of strength ?'

Full Chorus : And he said to them :

Second Speaker : 'Strength is life ; weakness is death. Strength is felicity, life
eternal, immortal ; weakness is constant strain and misery,
weakness is death. Whatever makes you strong is religion ;
whatever makes you weak is irreligion.'

Full Chorus : And, carrying with him the devotion of his American followers,
He sailed for England

And gathered about him there, too, disciples eager for the
divine quest.

And he said to them :

Second Speaker : 'We must all come to perfection in time, but only by giving
up imperfection. This world is at best only a hideous cari-
cature, a shadow of the Reality. We must go to the Reality.
Renunciation will take us to it. Renunciation is the very
basis of our true life ; every moment of goodness and real life
that we enjoy, is when we do not think of ourselves. This

little separate self must die. Then we shall find that we are in the Real, and that Reality is God, and He is our own true nature.'

Small Chorus : But the work that Vivekananda had set out to do in the West was ending,
And all his followers sorrowed as he told them
He must return to his beloved homeland.
With him he carried new ideas,
New methods, new modes of work,
The spirit of practical energy and the power to organize.
And he carried the love of Western disciples for the holy land
That had sent him forth.

Full Chorus : With these, and humility in his heart,
He approached the final purpose of his life.

PART THREE

Full Chorus : On India's shores jubilant multitudes greeted him,
And they thronged about him
With welcoming bands, with music,
Beating of drums and firing of cannon,
With garlands of flowers,
With waving of flags, flaming of torches,
With loud cheers and great parades,
With adulation and with prayers :
For he was their hero,
Their man of the hour.
Not a general, not a prince, not a wealthy man,
But an unknown *sannyāsin* had become a leader of men.
He had gone out to conquer the world
With a noble message and an open heart ;
He returned to find his own people reawakened.
For he had written to them :

Second Speaker : 'India must arise ! What India needs is a new electric fire to stir up a fresh vigour in the national veins. The masses and the poor are to be made happy. Be content to work, and above all, be true to yourself. Stand firm like a rock. Be pure, staunch and sincere to the very backbone. Onward ! Upon ages of struggle character is built. Be not discouraged. The greatest sin is fear. Truth is indestructible, virtue is indestructible, purity is indestructible. Be holy, trust in the Lord, depend on Him always and nothing can prevail against you.'

Small Chorus : In the south and in the north,
Wherever he went,
He touched the hearts
Of princes and beggars,

Statesmen and those oppressed,
 Of scholars and labourers.
 He saw his people take new life ;
 And Vivekananda's own heart was gladdened,
 For he loved them all.
 And he said to them :

Second Speaker : 'It is rebellion against nature, struggle for self-preservation, that differentiates Spirit from Matter. Where there is life, there is struggle, there is the manifestation of the Spirit. You are in a hypnotized state. You have been told that you are weak, you are nobodies. If you have the same faith in yourselves as I had, if you can rouse that power in yourselves, you will do wonders. You must learn and realize that Truth, then go and tell every Indian, "Arise, awake, and dream no more. Rouse thyself and manifest the divinity within." '

Small Chorus : Drawn by the brilliance of his light,
 Disciples came, and dedicated their lives.
 They were exhorted to carry light to others ;
 And by seeing God in them,
 To serve the poor, the helpless, the diseased,
 In a new spirit of reverence.
 And he said to them :

Second Speaker : 'Remember, for the salvation of one's own soul and for the good and happiness of the many, the *Sannyāsin* is born in the world. To sacrifice his own life for others, to alleviate the misery of millions rending the air with their cries, to wipe away the tears from the eyes of the widow, to console the heart of the bereaved mother, to provide the ignorant and the depressed masses with the ways and means for the struggle for existence and make them stand on their own feet, to preach broadcast the teachings of the Scriptures to one and all without distinction, for their material and spiritual welfare, to rouse the sleeping lion of Brahman in the hearts of all beings by the diffusion of the light of knowledge—the *Sannyāsin* is born in the world.'

Full Chorus : And to this end
 Vivekananda conceived a plan
 To implement his vision—
 That what had been begun might endure,
 And what had been dreamed might come to be.
 From East and West,
 Householder and monk,
 Arose a band of followers
 Who shared the vision and the dream,
 And joining with him in holy labour and devotion,

They gave it form.

And he said to them :

Second Speaker : 'This association will bear the name of him in whose name we have become *Sannyāsins*, taking whom as your ideal you are leading the life of householders. . . , and whose holy name and the influence of whose unique life and teachings have, within twelve years of his passing away, spread in such an unthought-of way both in the East and in the West. Let this organization therefore be named the Ramakrishna Mission.'

PART FOUR

Full Chorus : And now, he moved into the final stage of his life, the final work—

The preparation of his young disciples.

Small Chorus : Into their eager minds and hearts

He poured his knowledge and his power.

He taught them austerity, and they became strong.

He taught them devotion, and they became tender.

And with their strength and tenderness

He called them forth to action.

Full Chorus : For a great wave had only risen from the sea ;

A great work was only beginning.

What had begun would be carried forward

By future generations for the blessing

Of all mankind.

Vivekananda saw and rejoiced.

Small Chorus : His work in the world was finished,

Like the flower that blooms and withers

To make way for the fruit.

Solo : He told the loving disciples that soon

He would be leaving them.

How could they believe that their beloved teacher and friend,

In the fulness of his power and manhood,

Would leave them ?

Small Chorus : But the hero's energies were spent ;

He knew that rest was near.

And yet he said to them :

Second Speaker : 'May I be born again and again, and suffer thousands of miseries, so that I may worship the only God that exists, the only God I believe in, the sum total of all souls ; and above all, my God the poor, my God the wicked, my God the miserable of all races, of all species. . . I shall not cease to work ! I shall inspire men everywhere until the world shall know that it is one with God !'

Full Chorus : Then the last day came.

Vivekananda went about his calling,

Teaching his disciples,
 Entering with them into plans for the future,
 Singing songs of devotion.

Small Chorus : The great light of his presence
 Was never more luminous.
 In the evening he went into his room
 And sat alone in meditation ;
 A great peace filled him.
 The moment had come...

Full Chorus : The free soul cast off his body like a worn-out garment
 And returned to the realm to which he belonged.
 From the Absolute he had come ;
 To the Absolute he returned.

Sri Ramakrishna's Vision about Swami Vivekananda

'One day I found that my mind was soaring high in Samadhi along a luminous path. It soon transcended the stellar universe and entered the subtler region of ideas. As it ascended higher and higher, I found on both sides of the way ideal forms of gods and goddesses. The mind then reached the outer limits of that region, where a luminous barrier separated the sphere of relative existence from that of the Absolute. Crossing that barrier, the mind entered the transcendental realm, where no corporal being was visible. Even the gods dared not peep into that sublime realm, and were content to keep their seats far below. But the next moment I saw seven venerable sages seated there in Samadhi. It occurred to me that these sages must have surpassed not only men but even the gods in knowledge and holiness, in renunciation and love. Lost in admiration, I was reflecting on their greatness, when I saw a portion of that undifferentiated luminous region condense into the form of a divine child. The child came to one of the sages, tenderly clasped his neck with his lovely arms, and addressing him in a sweet voice, tried to drag his mind down from the state of Samadhi. That magic touch roused the sage from his superconscious state, and he fixed his half-open eyes upon the wonderful child. His beaming countenance showed that the child must have been the treasure of his heart. In great joy the strange child spoke to him, "I am going down. You, too, must go with me." The sage remained mute, but his tender look expressed his assent. As he kept gazing on the child, he was again immersed in Samadhi. I was surprised to find that a fragment of his body and mind was descending on earth in the form of a bright light. No sooner had I seen Narendra than I recognised him to be that sage.'

Life of Sri Ramakrishna, p. 336-37.

SAMKHYA CONCEPTION OF LIBERATION

DR. ANIMA SEN GUPTA

Our life on earth constantly swings like a pendulum between pleasures and pains, happiness and misery. Even if it is possible for a man to shun all other pains and pleasures, it is impossible for him to resist decay and death. Of course, all men earnestly strive to remove every kind of misery and pain, but so long as we remain on the empirical level only, we cannot enjoy unmixed and pure pleasure or happiness. This is the most important truth regarding our life on earth. So, if a man is to rise above the level of sorrowful existence, he must, first of all, realize that all wordly pleasures lead to sorrow and that no wordly means can remove forever the sufferings of this empirical life. The Sāṃkhya system has started with an analysis of three kinds of misery that generally destroy the pleasures of life. These are the *adhyātmika* pain, *adhidaivika* pain and *adhibhautika* pain. The first kind is caused by the disorders of the mind-body system. It includes fever, anger, greed, fear etc. The second is produced by external agents like other men, beasts, natural force etc. The third kind is produced by supernatural causes e.g. the pains inflicted by ghosts and demons etc.

All these evils of life cannot be removed either by science or by religious practices and other known means. The performance of sacrifices according to Vedic rites, may remove pain for a short period but as these actions involve the sacrifices of animals, they must ultimately produce pain and no pleasures. But this sort of relief, too, is very short-lived, as there will be recurrence of such mental and physical ailments. The knowledge of science and performance of religious sacrifices, cannot, therefore, lead to the final annihilation of

sufferings and pains, though these ordinary means have a limited value in making life at least tolerably happy on this earth. Hence, the question arises, 'How are we to attain absolute freedom from all pain and suffering?' The Sāṃkhya says that all our misery is due to ignorance. *Buddhi* and *Puruṣa* are distinct and different, but through ignorance a seeming unity between the two is wrongly established (*ekamevadarsanam*) as a result of which sorrows and sufferings, pain and misery, which really belong to *buddhi*, seem to follow *Puruṣa* from birth to birth. It is necessary, therefore, that through *tattvābhyāsa*, we should form in *buddhi*, the true conception of the nature of *Puruṣa* and then with the help of this saving knowledge, we shall be able to attain liberation from the sorrows and sufferings of this world.

Change is in *Prakṛti* alone and it is the body that grows old and dies. The spirit is ever free but through misconception, bondage and liberation are attributed to the self. When the self is conceived of as bound and fettered, it experiences all the sorrows and joys that really happen to its case, i.e. the body. When discriminative knowledge is attained through *tattvābhyāsa*, Nature ceases to evolve in regard to the aspirant, the seeming unity is destroyed and self attains release, which is the final goal of Nature's evolution. It is through a long course of spiritual training that the intellect becomes free from the soiling influences of *rajas* and *tamas*, it becomes almost similar to the *Puruṣa* in purity and transparency. [*Rajas* and *Tamas* cannot, however, be totally eliminated but their presence will be harmless for all practical purposes.] In that purified con-

dition of the *buddhi*, is reflected the true nature of the spiritual principle and so the *buddhi* feels itself to be different from and unrelated to the pure and transcendental soul as a result of which ignorance of the *jīva* is totally destroyed. Under such circumstances, Nature turns its back on the liberated Puruṣa and ceases its activity of binding such a self to this life of *samsāra*. It should, however, be remembered that with the attainment of release by a single Puruṣa, Prakṛti does not cease to function. There are other Puruṣas, who are still to be liberated and Nature goes on working in her own way for the release of those bound souls. The released Puruṣa too perceives Prakṛti, but is no longer deluded by her powers of creation. In that state of release, both the principles exist: what has been brought to an end is the delusion under which Puruṣa thought that the evolutes of Nature were its own creation and, therefore, identical with itself.

Now, the question arises, how is this beginningless delusion to be removed? Or how is *tattvābhyāsa*, resulting in liberation, to be done? The *tattvābhyāsa* prescribed for liberation embraces *yogaprakriyā*, which has been fully discussed in the *Yoga-Sūtra* of Patañjali.

In the initial stage, the study of the Sāṃkhya philosophy will provide the aspirant with *parokṣa-jñāna* (mediate knowledge) of the distinction between Puruṣa and Prakṛti. The aspirant will receive instructions on the Sāṃkhya texts from the preceptor. This is the stage of *śravaṇa*. Next stage is the stage of *manana*. This is the stage of rational reflection. The aspirant will reflect on the truths learnt from the *Sāṃkhya-Sūtra* rationally; he will drive out all possible objections that can be raised against the Sāṃkhya by reasoning and arguments (*yukti* and *tarka*) with the result that the truths (gained from the Sāṃkhya philosophy) will become

firmly rooted in his mind. This is the stage when the aspirant develops a firm faith and respect (*śraddhā*) for *Ātma-sākṣātkāra*. This *śraddhā* automatically results in *vīrya* or eagerness and mental capacity to undertake the difficult task of self-realization. The *vīrya*, in its turn increases *dhyānaśakti* or the power of meditation. The aspirant, then, becomes fit for attaining the stage of *samādhi*, which is the stage of pure knowledge and self-realization.

Hence, after the stage of *manana*, the aspirant enters into the stage of *nididhyāsana* or the stage of actual yogic practice, which, in due course, results in immediate knowledge of *Ātmasvarūpa*.

The eight limbs of the yogic process are to be followed strictly and in order; of course, *yama* and *niyama* are to be practised (in a sense) even in the initial stage to become the *adhikārī* for *tattvajñāna*. This is because a man, with a pure intellect alone, is capable of grasping the true significance of the scriptural truth. Before coming to the preceptor, the aspirant should have a broad general training in ethical discipline—a training which is absolutely necessary to develop human character; otherwise there cannot be much hope of success in the stages of spiritual life. But when the aspirant follows the path of *Aṣṭāṅga-Yoga*, the ethical discipline prescribed for yogic *sādhana* and devotional practices is to be performed rigidly and with concentrated attention.

When the aspirant will rise upto the mental level of one pointed attention and will be able to remain there steadily for a long period of time, he will become the fit person to attain *samādhi* with the help of attention and contemplation (*dhyāna*, *dhāraṇā*). The *samādhi* that takes place in the *ekāgrabhūmi* of the *citta* is called *samprajñāta-samādhi*, which, again, involves four stages. These four stages are known

as four forms of concrete communion (*samprajñāta-samādhi*).

In the first stage, there is the perception of gross substances and also of the distinction between consciousness and the gross substances of the world. Consciousness, no doubt, will be still *viśaya* of the *cittavṛtti* (since *caitanya* will be reflected in the *vṛtti* of the gross object): even then, consciousness will be perceived as something different from the gross substance. When an individual remains in the *avivekī* stage, he can perceive neither the pure consciousness, nor the gross object in its pure form. He then, perceives both consciousness and gross matter in a mixed form. So long as the *citta* does not become steady, consciousness in its pure form cannot be perceived. Such perception, therefore, occurs only in the stage of Yoga. By repeated performance of the triad of attention, contemplation and meditation, this spiritual progress will become steady and firmly rooted in the personality of the aspirant and he will be able to perceive the difference that exists between consciousness and the gross matter. This stage is known as *savitarka* stage in the Yoga philosophy.

The next stage of spiritual progress is the stage of *savicāra* when by practising the triad of attention, concentration and meditation, the aspirant will be able to perceive the difference of consciousness from all subtle things of the world. Here, we should remember that if anybody follows the path of Yoga without possessing *tattvajñāna*, (i.e. the *parokṣa-jñāna* of the difference between *jada* & *caitanya* is not properly attained by the aspirant) he will not be able to have a perception either of the *mahābhūtas* or of the *tanmātras*, *indriyas* etc. in their pure form. Consciousness, too, will be perceived by him not in its pure form but in a state of indistinguishable union (*avivikta* state) with

the subtle parts of Prakṛti. This is perhaps what happens to *videhalayī* and *Prakṛtilayī* yogins, who still suffer from *aviveka*. Such a *samādhi*, which has ignorance at its root, is known as *bhava-pratyaya*. But the aspirant, who has got his *vivekajñāna* firmly rooted in him, by *śravaṇa*, *manana* etc. and has also been able to perceive the distinction between *caitanya* and the gross matter of the world is, now, in a position to perceive the *śuddha-svarūpa* of the subtle substances of the world and also of the true form of consciousness. Although he will be able to perceive *indriyas* in this stage, still his egosense or *ahamvṛtti* will not be annihilated. *Ahamvṛtti*, which lies at the very root of our practical life and without which dealings in the practical sphere cannot be carried on, is very firmly rooted in us. Removal of egosense, therefore, needs strenuous spiritual *sādhana*. This *ahamvṛtti nirodha* becomes the special *sādhana* of the third and the fourth stages of *samprajñāta-samādhi*, which are known as *ānanda-samādhi* and *asmitā-samādhi*.

In the stage of *ānanda-samādhi*, the object of meditation is purely *sāttvika ahamkāra*. Due to the application of *dhyāna*, *dhāraṇā* and *samādhi* to *sāttvika ahamkāra*, *raja* and *tama* parts become practically ineffective; only the pure *sattvāmśa* of *ahamkāra* remains operative. *Sattva* is of the nature of happiness or bliss. Hence, in the stage of *ānanda* (due to increasing activity of the *sattva guṇa*) the aspirant experiences a pleasurable feeling all the time. This happiness is pure happiness (unmixed with the effects of *rajas* and *tamas*, which have become inoperative). Many aspirants become interested in the enjoyment of this unmixed happiness and prefer to remain in this stage. They do not make any more efforts to reach the highest stage of liberation. The happiness

enjoyed in the *ānanda* stage is inferior to the bliss, which forms the essence of consciousness. Since self-realization is regarded as the highest and the best, self must be admitted as the object of love and adoration. That which is very dear to us, is surely of the nature of *ānanda*. *Yat paramānandarūpo na bhavati sa niratiśaya premaviśayo na bhavati.* (*Pañcadaśī*) Hence, to attain self-realization, one has to go beyond the third stage of the *samprajñāta-samādhi*. He has to make concentrated efforts to rise up to the *asmitā* stage, which is the final stage of the concrete union or *samprajñāta-samādhi*. By the time the *asmitā* stage is reached, the ego-sense that individualizes a *jīva*, comes to an end; its cause however (in the form of *mahattattva* permeated with consciousness) does not cease to exist. By applying the triad of attention, concentration and meditation, the aspirant is capable of having a perceptual knowledge of the pure *mahattattva* and also of its distinction from consciousness, which is the *svarūpa* of the aspirant. This is a stage which cannot be properly described in words. In this stage also, there will be some *vr̥tti* of the form of *jaḍa* along with the *caitanyavr̥tti* but there will be no awareness of what this *jaḍa viśaya* is. Just as in the cases of some of our dreams, we can simply remember that we have dreamt of something but what this something is, is beyond our recollection, in the same manner, in this stage also, there is only the manifestation of the *vr̥tti*; the object of the *vr̥tti* is not known. It is because the object or the *grāhya* is not manifested that there is no differentiation between *grahitā*, *grahana* and *grāhya* even though the intellectualized intellect in the form of *grahitā* and *vr̥tti* in the form of *grahana* are manifested. Although *vr̥tti* is manifested, still we cannot describe it, because its object is not manifested. It appears as *nirviśayaka-*

vr̥tti. It is because such *vr̥tti* is beyond the comprehension of human beings that the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika and Rāmānuja have not admitted the existence of *nirviśayakajñāna*.

Asamprajñāta-Samādhi.

Samprajñāta-samādhi is not the final stage of the *svārūpāvasthāna* of the Puruṣa, because in this stage there is still the manifestation of consciousness through *vr̥tti*. Manifestation of consciousness without *vr̥tti* is what is described as *svārūpasthiti* of the Puruṣa in the *Yoga-Sūtra*: '*Tadā draṣṭuḥ svārūpe avasthānam*'.

Hence, the aspirant has to reach another stage of Yoga, which is known as *asamprajñāta* stage or the stage in which Puruṣa is manifested without *vr̥ttis*. Such a manifestation of Puruṣa is possible only when all *vr̥ttis* are stopped.

In the stage of *samprajñāta-samādhi*, *vr̥tti* annihilation starts and progresses step by step and finally it is completed in the *asamprajñāta* stage of *samādhi*. It is because all *vr̥ttis* are stopped in the *asamprajñāta* stage that this stage is known as the stage of *vr̥tti nirodha*. Now, such a stage, in which all *vr̥ttis* are stopped and consciousness is manifested without *vr̥ttis*, lasts (in the initial stage) for a short duration. With the disappearance of all *vr̥ttis*, consciousness is manifested in its pure form; *vivekajñāna* is fully attained and snare of Prakṛti is totally removed. This is the stage of *jīvanmukti*. The *jīvanmukta* has risen upto the stage of *svārūpāvasthāna* but this stage has not become firmly rooted as yet. Hence, the *jīvanmukta* will have to make efforts to attain this *svārūpasthiti* permanently. *Vr̥tti* should not rise (even for a moment) either spontaneously, or by efforts. This is the first stage of *asamprajñāta-samādhi* or the stage of *jīvanmukti* according to *Sāmkhya-Yoga*. How long this stage will continue will depend upon *prārabdha-karma*.

When the *asamprajñāta* state or the *nirvṛttika* state will become steady and fixed, *vṛttis* will be stopped for ever. There will, no more, be any *grahana* and consequently the feeling of *grahitā-grahana*, too, will come to an end. *Citta* or *buddhi* in this stage, will stop functioning forever and so it will start contracting, which will ultimately result in the merging of the *citta* in its causal substance (i.e. the *guṇas*). So long as *buddhi* persists in its

buddhi form (although it may be contracted to a considerable extent) the *jīvan-mukta* will continue to live in this world: because there will, still be, the vital function due to the existence of the *citta*. As soon as *citta* gets merged in the *guṇas*, the vital function too stops automatically and the yogin is separated forever from the body. This is the stage of *videha-mukti* according to *Sāmkhya-Yoga*.

HISTORY, SCIENCE AND MYTH*

GERMAIN BAZIN

Always tributary of the rules of rhetoric, handling those dialectical tools, the gender, the species, the difference, the essential and the accidental, western thought proceeds by the deductive method, and from distinction to difference, division to resolution, thesis to antithesis and from subject to object, it rejoins unity only by that action of synthesis which is operative by virtue of a mutilation of plurality, obtained by some kind of discipline, striking out from each term of reasoning everything which is not analogical to that which precedes or which follows. It is a reduction to the unit, similar to the mathematical operation of reducing to fractions, since it is the fractions of reality which remain in the final result, which presupposes moreover a willingness to put an end to the very practice of thinking. Pascal was the great master in this field, all of whose philosophy, which has never ceased to pro-

voke commentary, is contained in a few of his 'Thoughts'.

The way of thinking in India is not to reduce to the unit. It takes the one in its essential reality, that is to say in its totality, which is not a sum but rather a multiplication without end. In its proliferant action, it proceeds by detour, but also by return, reinvesting constantly that which it has just separated, reintegrating into the totality that of which it has just defined the identity. Indian philosophy does not reach unity by way of distinctions, but in the very contradiction which is the thread of things, in that perpetual convergence towards being, in this agreement at the limit of the unlimited.

To the western mind, the purposes of thought are history and science. History adapts itself to this exercise of the intelligence which takes place in time and which believes itself to escape from time, by reflecting in the present past acts, imagining itself as reaching immortality by the recital of mortal things. As regards science, 'it considers nature as something to be conquered and domesticated, which

* Text of the Preface as forwarded to the recently published book, *Mythes et Religions de L'Inde* (*Myths and Religions of India*). G. P. Maisonneuve et Larose, Paris.

perpetuates the duality between man and nature'. (Swami Nityabodhananda : *Myths and Religions of India*, p. 138) Arising from the wish to grasp the world, it separates us from it by the very act by which it professes to unite us with it. The scholars of the nineteenth century believed they saw the time approaching when science would succeed in penetrating the secret of things; those of the twentieth century, more advanced, knew that they could never unveil the heart of the mystery, while the philosophers, from Kierkegaard to Jean-Paul Sartre, in an over-refined analysis of the act of knowledge, saw the very substance of being dissolve.

Indian thought tends towards myth and religion. This book [*Myths and Religions of India*] invites us to explore the meaning of the myth which—after the scepticisms of the nineteenth century, which saw in it only fables—the most serious minds of the present day, armed with the discoveries of psychoanalysis, are beginning to admit that the myth has a profound reality, greater than that of history which is the captive of the chain of time. It is by destroying time that the myth protects man from his own destruction, tearing him from the ephemeris of history. For, 'the arrival of the gods in history is a moment of eternity, always present in time. This moment constitutes the duration, as the moving point constitutes the line. In philosophy, the Being has temporal aspects; the Being is the origin of time; time is the horizon of the Being. That, which philosophy designates as temporality, corresponds to this moving point of love or grace which one finds in mythology, this intemporal love which agrees to become temporal to make man conscious of his own eternity, his intemporality.' (ibid., p. 86)

History is the recital of all that has separated man. Toynbee, attempting to

find some unity in the complexity of past ages, enumerated not less than twenty-two typical civilizations. Mythology includes everything that makes man alike to himself. Establishing the morphology of the sacred, Mircea Eliade has been able, from mythological legends of the most distant civilizations in time and space, also on the evolutionary level, to regroup the great mythical currents of humanity.

The myth is the threshold through which man passes from the visible to the invisible, from this world of appearances, where everything is changing, to the hidden world of mother forms. This mystical threshold is that of 'Grace', that word of infinite resonance, infinitely more significant than the term religion, with which western man designates all in man which tends to transcend him. It is a strange destiny which decrees that the more man attempts to circumscribe himself, the more he tries to flee from himself, and while escaping this limitation, to which he holds so dearly, he suddenly enters into intuitive communication with the self and by the Self with that which, ceasing to be 'the exterior world', is experienced within as Reality. It is by cutting off all outer activity that the Indian sage finds in the regained Self the sense of universal life, that he drinks finally from the spring of life which runs in every being but which, before its murmurings can be heard, demands silence . . . and love. Love, which reunites that which science separates and which in its most common human form, eroticism, the ephemeral abolishing duality, and which at its supreme degree is that divine will from which the world emanates in a continuing act, exalts multiplicity as the inexhaustible wealth of unity.

Are these two directions irreducible? Can they not converge into some royal way, where rational and irrational, history and myth, science and mysticism, philos-

ophy and religion could not only be reconciled, but regain the harmony flowing from the very conflict, in that ingenuousness for which, as the myths of the golden age, of the garden of Eden and of Paradise clearly show, mankind has always experienced a nostalgia? In this way, could not the anguish and distortion from which the modern world suffers find that miraculous cure for which the psychotherapists are constantly searching, rather as the alchemists of the past sought the Philosopher's stone? This book answers this purpose. *The Myths and Religions of India* show us the philosophical and mystical wealth of a mind which has gone to the source of the Vedānta, but which is also steeped in the philosophical disciplines whose tradition from the Eleates to Descartes, Kant and Hégel, through the Carolingian and Roman schools and the scholastics, has never failed. The two systems of investigation, that of the spirit in search

of the Self and that of the world, interweave here like the winding of a *maṇḍala* which, little by little, within its limits, encloses the infinite.

This work has not been inspired by a desire for knowledge—which would be judged by a Swami as a trick of Māyā—but by faith, that faith for which, in accordance with the ideals of the Order of Ramakrishna, all religions have the same origin, 'as the different colours of the rainbow all come from white'. Is this not the spiritual mission of India, to 'follow throughout the centuries the destiny accorded to it, to embrace and reunite in the same love all the various convictions and to allow them to accomplish their purpose'? (ibid., p. 180)

Is not India, more than any other civilisation of the modern world, ready to listen to the appeal for ecumenism which rings from Bombay to Fatima?

NOTES AND COMMENTS

IN THIS NUMBER

The conversation, as recorded in 'Some Vital Questions Answered', is inspiring for every aspirant of spiritual life. We are thankful to Mrs. Courtenaya Olden of New York, U.S.A. for the text which she has made available to us for publication.

Swami Pavitrananda is the Head of the Vedanta Society of New York, U.S.A. The text of the article entitled 'Faith in Yourself and Faith in God' has been adapted from a lecture which the Swami delivered at the Vedanta Society of New York on May 22, 1966.

Moses is one of the great Lawgivers of the humanity. But he was more

than that. He was a man of God, a great Prophet from whose life and teachings there arose a great religion that once saved the men of Israel by leading them to the path of God. The article entitled 'Moses, Man of God' as written by Rabbi Asher Block of New York, U.S.A., gives us a glimpse into the life and the teachings of that God-man of old. We are thankful to Rabbi Block for this valuable article which he has so kindly contributed to the columns of this special issue of *Prabuddha Bharata*.

Hindu mythology describes great psychological and philosophical truths in the garb of a new language. In the article on 'Śiva: Interval between Enjoyment and

its Negation', Swami Nityabodhananda, Head of the Ramakrishna Vedanta Centre, Geneva, Switzerland deciphers the language of some of those myths that centre round the great god Śiva, who, according to the Hindus, is the symbol of renunciation and bliss.

Swami Vidyatmananda who was formerly one of the Editors of the *Vedanta and the West*, a Journal of the Vedanta Society of Southern California, Hollywood, is now at the Centre Vedantique Ramakrichna at Gretz near Paris in France. The Swami was transferred to the Gretz centre two years ago from the Vedanta Society of Hollywood where he remained for about sixteen years. His present article on 'Swami Vivekananda in Brittany and Normandy' is a valuable research study which necessitated extensive searchings, interviews, photographing and enquiries at different places. The article, though not a solid historical report, gives one much information about Swami Vivekananda's historic visit to those places of France. Our readers may refer to the present author's other article entitled 'Swami Vivekananda in France' published in our March 1967 issue; for, the present article is, in many ways, a continuation of the previous one. The author wishes to express his appreciation to the following for their help towards the finalization of this present article: Mrs. Frances H. Leggett; M. Jean Bruno, Conservateur au Département des Imprimés, Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris; M. Pierre Delestre; and Directors of the Shanti Foundation.

Sanat Kumar Raichoudhury, M.A., D.Phil. is a Lecturer in the Department of Philosophy, University of Burdwan, West Bengal. Dr. Raichoudhury presents here a brief life-sketch of Sister Nivedita and

quite appropriately captions the same as 'Sister Nivedita: The Rebel Child of a Great Master'.

Swami Sastrananda who was previously one of the Assistant Ministers at the Vedanta Society of Southern California, Hollywood, U.S.A. is now an Assistant Secretary of the Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture, Gol Park, Calcutta. In his article entitled 'A Guiding Light for Troubled Times', he thoughtfully envisions the birth of a new order of awakening that is bursting forth upon Indian life through diverse forms of changes and recalls once again the prophetic words of Swami Vivekananda in that connexion.

The text of the composition 'Swami Vivekananda (A Musical Biography)' reached us through the kind courtesy of Swami Pavitrananda, Head of the Vedanta Society of New York, U.S.A. The authors of the composition, the music director and the enthusiastic members of the Vedanta Society who joined the performance—all deserve our greetings and thanks.

(Miss) Anima Sen Gupta, M.A., Ph.D. is the Reader in Philosophy, Patna University. Her present article on 'Sāṃkhya Conception of Liberation' forms part of her forthcoming book entitled 'On Classical Sāṃkhya: A Critical Study'.

Germain Bazin is the Chief Curator of the Louvre Museum, Paris, France. His short review on 'History, Science and Myth' forms the text of the Preface which he has forwarded to the book, *Mythes et Religions de L'Inde (Myths and Religions of India)*: by Swami Nityabodhananda, Head of the Ramakrishna Vedanta Centre, Geneva, Switzerland. The review is an excellent comparative study on the thoughts of the East and the West.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

THE MYSTERIES OF GOD IN THE UNIVERSE. BY H. S. SPENCER, (WITH A FOREWORD BY MORARJI DESAI). H. P. Vaswani, 1 Rajkamal, 795/3 Padamjee Park, Poona-2. 1967 Distributors: Chetana Ltd., Bombay-1. Pages 184. Price Rs. 20.

The present work is by far the best of Mr. H. S. Spencer's works. It is a valuable text offering a comparative study of religions, and presenting the basic principles of spiritual philosophy. The first section shows that the doctrines of reincarnation and Karma are central to Zarathustrian teachings and to Christianity and Islam. Yasna 29 shows that Zarathustra lived before on earth as a human being. This is reinforced by yasnas 30, 32, and 45. The law of Karma appears in yasnas 43, 44 and 45. The two ideas together appear in yasnas 49 and 51. The Jewish book *Zohar* speaks of successive births of the same soul. Rabbi Manassa accepts it. The book of *Revelations* upholds it at 3.12. Jesus was said to have had prior incarnations in *St. John* (5), *St. Matthew* (16), *St. Mark* (8), and *St. Luke* (9). The best valuable passages are in *St. Matthew*, 17.12-13, and *St. John*, 3.1-13. Incidentally Mr. Spencer draws our attention to the expurgations carried out by the early fathers of the church. John the Baptist too spoke of the previous incarnation of Jesus (*St. John*, 1.15, 27, 30). Jesus too speaks of his earlier births (*John*, 8.56-58). The *Koran* accepts the law of Karma (*Sura*, 74.41, 52.16, 99.7-8). *Sura* 75 speaks of resurrection; but it is on the very day the individual dies (75.30). *Suras* 80.16-22, 81.16-17, 20.57, and 29.19 speak clearly of rebirth.

The second section is devoted to 'The mysteries of God in the universe'. Here the emphasis is rightly placed on the fundamental unity and oneness of all revealed religions. This leads the author to offer a stimulating account of the spiritual philosophy. In the Appendices to this section we are given the methods whereby we can find out the truth regarding the doctrine of reincarnation. These methods are hypnosis, mediumism, and Yoga.

The third section deals with the first four *avatāras* of Viṣṇu, the causes of the precession of equinoxes, and the common fundamentals of all revealed monotheistic religions. Of these, the first is the best satisfactory essay.

The present work also provides a resume of the major Aryan spiritual cycles, elaborately treated in *The Aryan Ecliptic Cycle*. Here Ahura Mazda is identified with Mahādeva (Śiva). *Gītā*, (10.25) makes the identification of Lord Kṛṣṇa with Bhṛgu;

and Mr. Spencer identifies Bhṛgu with Zarathustra. But the same chapter of the *Gītā* also identifies Lord Kṛṣṇa with Devaṛṣi Nārada (10.26), Kapila, Śaṅkara (10.23), Uśanas, and Sāmaveda. One would expect the author to consider these equations too.

DR. P. S. SASTRI

ENGLISH-SANSKRIT

THE WISDOM OF UNITY (MANIṢĀ PANCAKAM) OF ŚRĪ ŚAṅKARĀCĀRYA. TEXT IN DEVANAGRI AND ROMAN. EDITED WITH ENGLISH TRANSLATION AND COMMENTARY BY DR. T. M. P. MAHADEVAN. Ganesh & Co., Private Ltd., Madras-17. 1967. Pages 48. Price Rs. 3.

The shorter works of Śrī Śaṅkarācārya are profound mines of wisdom born of supreme spiritual experiences. They acquaint the reader with the fundamental truths of Advaita in such a way as to capture his attention for ever. One such is *Maniṣā Pañcakam*, five stanzas expressing spiritual wisdom. Dr. Mahadevan here offers this valuable text with a valuable commentary.

As the legend has it, Śiva appears as a *caṇḍāla* before the Ācārya; and when asked to leave the path, he asks whether it is one body to be separated from another, or it is one soul from another. Thereupon the Ācārya speaks out these five verses. The first four verses are respectively explanations of the *mahāvākyas*—'*Prajñānam Brahma*', '*Ahaṁ Brahmāsmi*', '*Tat-tvam-asi*', and '*Ayam Ātmā Brahman*'. The last is the song of the *jīvanmukta* in the manner of the closing passages of the *Taittirīya Upaniṣad*. The Ācārya was born into the Taittirīya Śākhā.

Dr. Mahadevan's commentary is illuminating and stimulating. His analysis of the nature of consciousness leads him to an examination of the concept in Mīmāṃsā and Vedānta. The commentator analyses the erroneous apprehension under the second stanza. One is disappointed by the absence of the analysis of the words '*avidyayā tri-guṇaya*'. *Avidyā* has the constitutions of the *tri-guṇas*. Karma and allied concepts are explained lucidly under the third. The fourth offers an exposition of the nature of the 'I', and the fifth provides an elucidation of the concept of *mokṣa*.

In the 'Obeisance to Śrī Śaṅkara' there is a misprint—*ānda* for *ānanda*.

The present booklet is a welcome addition. It is a must for every student of philosophy. Dr. Mahadevan is to be congratulated for the wealth of wisdom he could justifiably read into the text.

DR. P. S. SASTRI

HINDI

LOK PRAŚĀSAN. BY DR. AMALESWAR AVASTHI AND DR. SRIRAM MAHESHWARI. Lakshminarayan Agarwal, Agra 3. Pages 688. Price Rs. 15.

This is a voluminous work on Public Administration, covering the subject in all its aspects—theory and practice—and presenting the latest thinking in the field e.g. Appleby Report, Gorwala

Report etc. The authors have done well in giving copious footnotes reproducing in English the authoritative pronouncements of thinkers and statesmen on certain fundamentals of the science. Their glossary at the end giving the terms in English and their Hindi renderings is highly useful.

It is an exhaustive and useful manual.

M. P. PANDIT

NEWS AND REPORTS

THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION
CEYLON BRANCH

REPORT FOR APRIL 1964 TO MARCH 1966

This branch of the Ramakrishna Mission with its main centre at Colombo and sub-centre at Batticaloa continued to function as usual during the period under review and its activities were as follows:

The Colombo Centre: Regular worships at the shrine, religious classes, special lectures by eminent persons on various cultural and religious subjects and discourses and special instructions by the Swamis to the devotees on religious subjects were the main items of the activities of the Centre during the period.

The Poyaday religious classes for children had on rolls a strength of 550 and these were conducted under the supervision of 18 honorary teachers. Anniversary celebrations (12th and 13th) of the Poyaday School were observed with éclat and solemnity. Such classes were also conducted on Poyadays at the Training School for the Juvenile Delinquents at Wattupitiwela, at a distance of 30 miles from Colombo.

The birthdays of Sri Ramakrishna, The Holy Mother Sri Sarada Devi and Swami Vivekananda as well as important functions such as *Śivarātrī*, Christmas Eve, Wesak day and *Navarātrī* were also celebrated duly.

In the Library, there were 2,430 books and the Reading Room received 25 monthly and weekly magazines and 2 bi-weekly and a daily newspapers. The publications of the Mission were sold to the people through its Book Sales Department. The International Cultural Centre provided accom-

modation for deserving students and guests with facilities of religious and cultural training and conducted classes on cultural and religious subjects. The construction of the Swami Vivekananda Centenary Memorial Hall was undertaken during this period.

The Kataragama Madam of the Mission continued to render service to the visiting pilgrims. On an average the number of pilgrims who sought a restful stay in the Madam was more than 300 on week days and nearly 700 on week-end days. During the annual festival, held in July-August, 12,000 pilgrims visited the holy shrine at Kataragama and they were served with free meals every day for 17 days. Buttermilk and lime-juice were supplied to 20,000 pilgrims daily. Religious discourses and *bhajans* were regularly arranged at the Madam during the festival days and on other occasions.

Batticaloa Ashrama: Weekly religious classes, worships and *bhajans* were conducted for the inmates of the Mantivu Leper asylum and the local jail. Religious classes for the Poya School children and Friday *bhajan* meetings at the Vipulananda Memorial Hall were also conducted regularly. In addition to all these, the branch maintained three Homes—one for the boys at Kalladi Uppodai and two for girls at Anaipanthi and Karativu. The total strength was 125 of which 60 were girls. These Homes provided all privileges to the poor orphans and the destitute children to enable them to get an all round education up to the Higher School Certificate and University Entrance Examination. Important religious festivals and celebrations were also observed duly.

SRI RAMAKRISHNA'S BIRTHDAY

The one hundred and thirty-third birthday of Sri Ramakrishna falls on Friday, the 1st March, 1968.



The stars are blotted out the clouds are covering clouds
It is darkness vibrant, sonant, in the roaring whirling wind
are the source of a million lunatics, just loose from the prison house
Wrenching trees by the roots sweeping all from the path
sea has joined the play and swirls up mountain waves
To reach the piteous sky - The flash of lurid light
Reveals on every side A thousand horrors and shades

of Death begimmed and black-scattering plagues and sorrows,
Dancing mad with joy; Come, Mother Come!
For Terror is Thy name; Death is in Thy breath,
And every shaking step destroys a world for e'er,
Thou Time, the all-destroyer! Come, O Mother, Come!
Who dares misery love, And hug the form of Death,
Dance in destruction's dance, to him the Mother Comes.

KALI THE MOTHER

Composed by Swami Vivekananda in Kashmir (1898)

Artist : Ramananda Banerjee

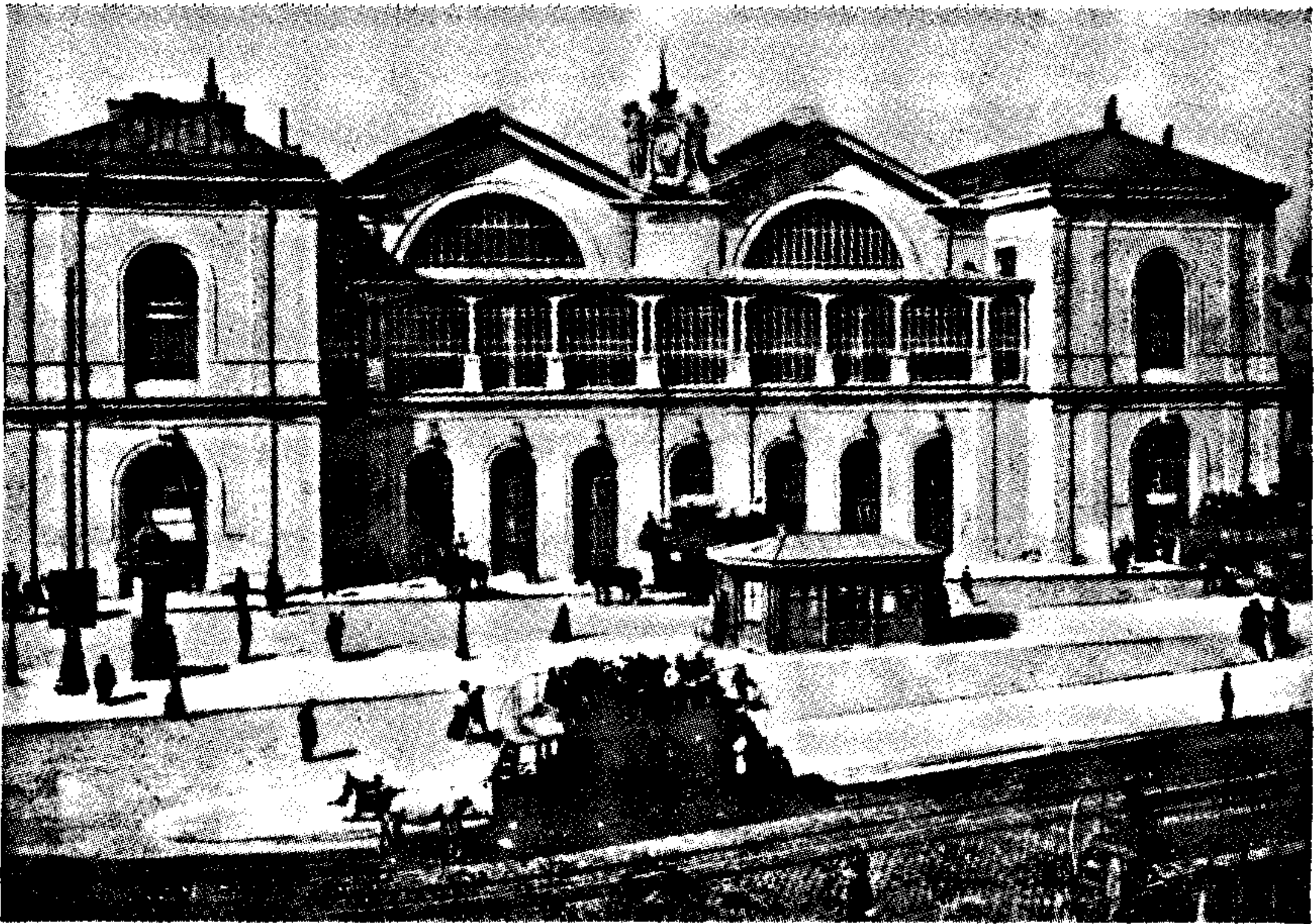


III. Mme Rose Leemur

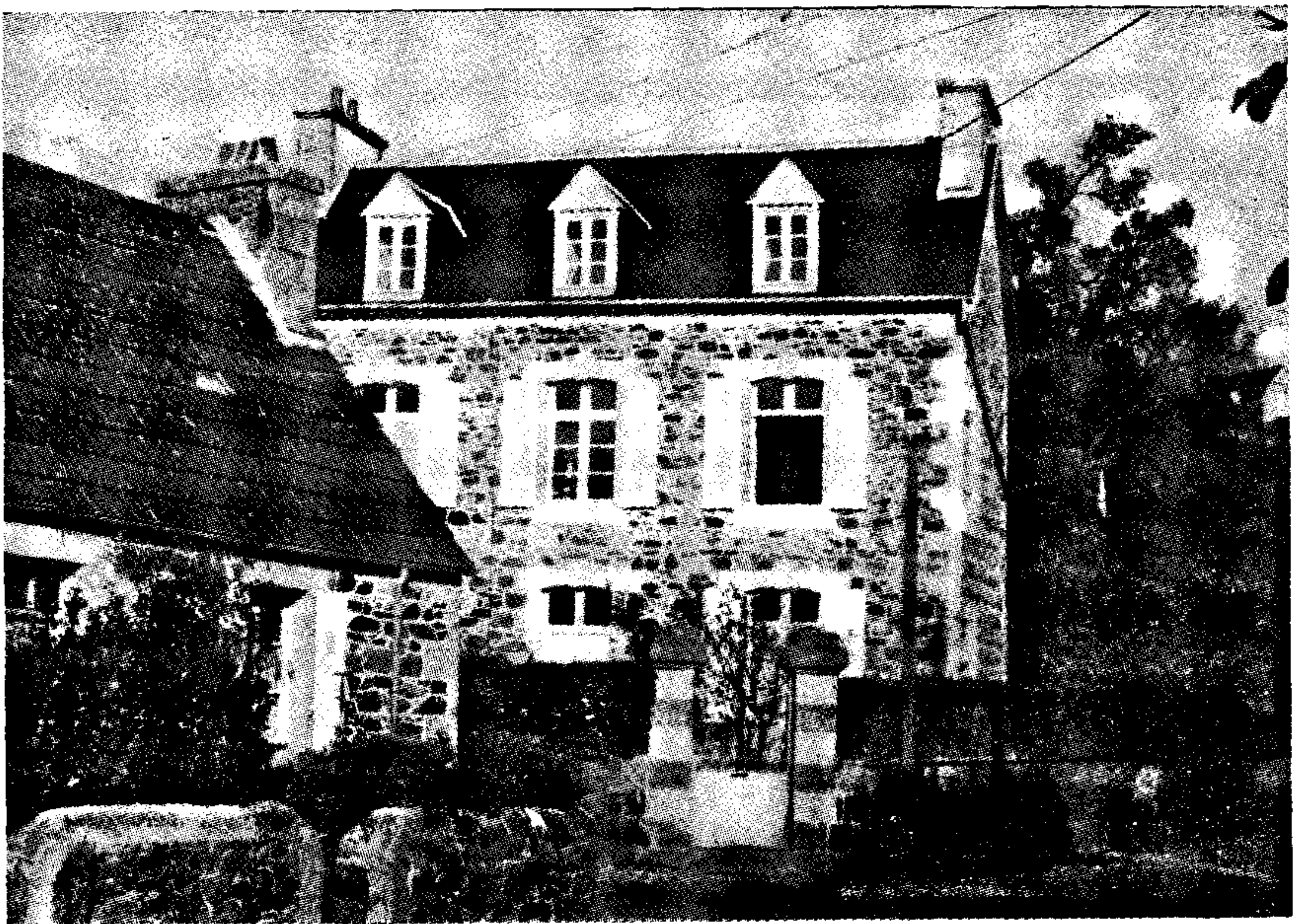


IV. A 'Day of Pardon', Perros-Guirec, about 1900. The procession is leaving from the Church of St. Jacques.

Courtesy : Centre Vedantique Ramakrishna, Gretz, France.

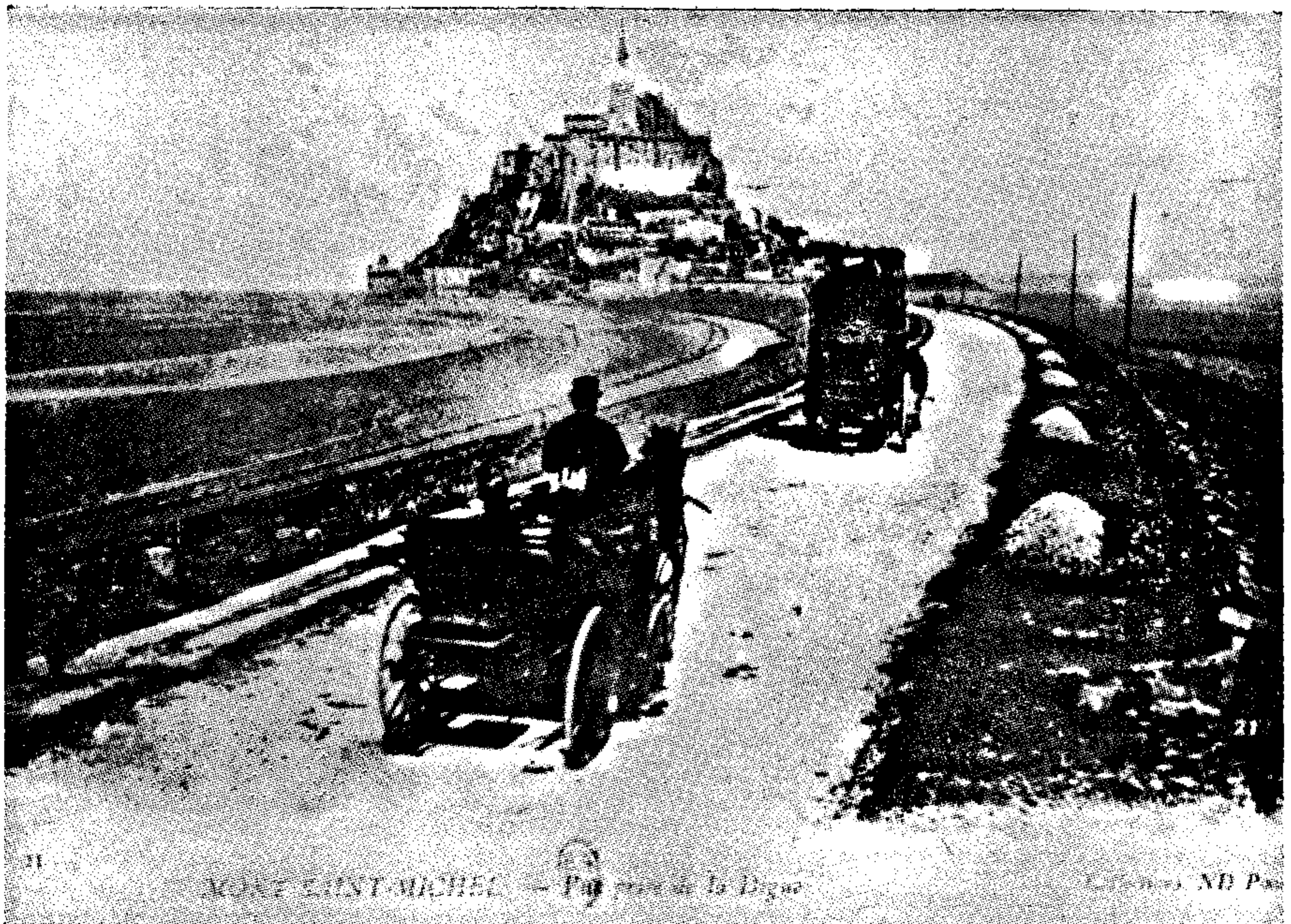


I. Montparnasse Station, Paris, in 1900.



II. The main house, Villa St. Guirec, Perros-Guirec.

Courtesy : Centre Vedantique Ramakrichna. Gretz, France

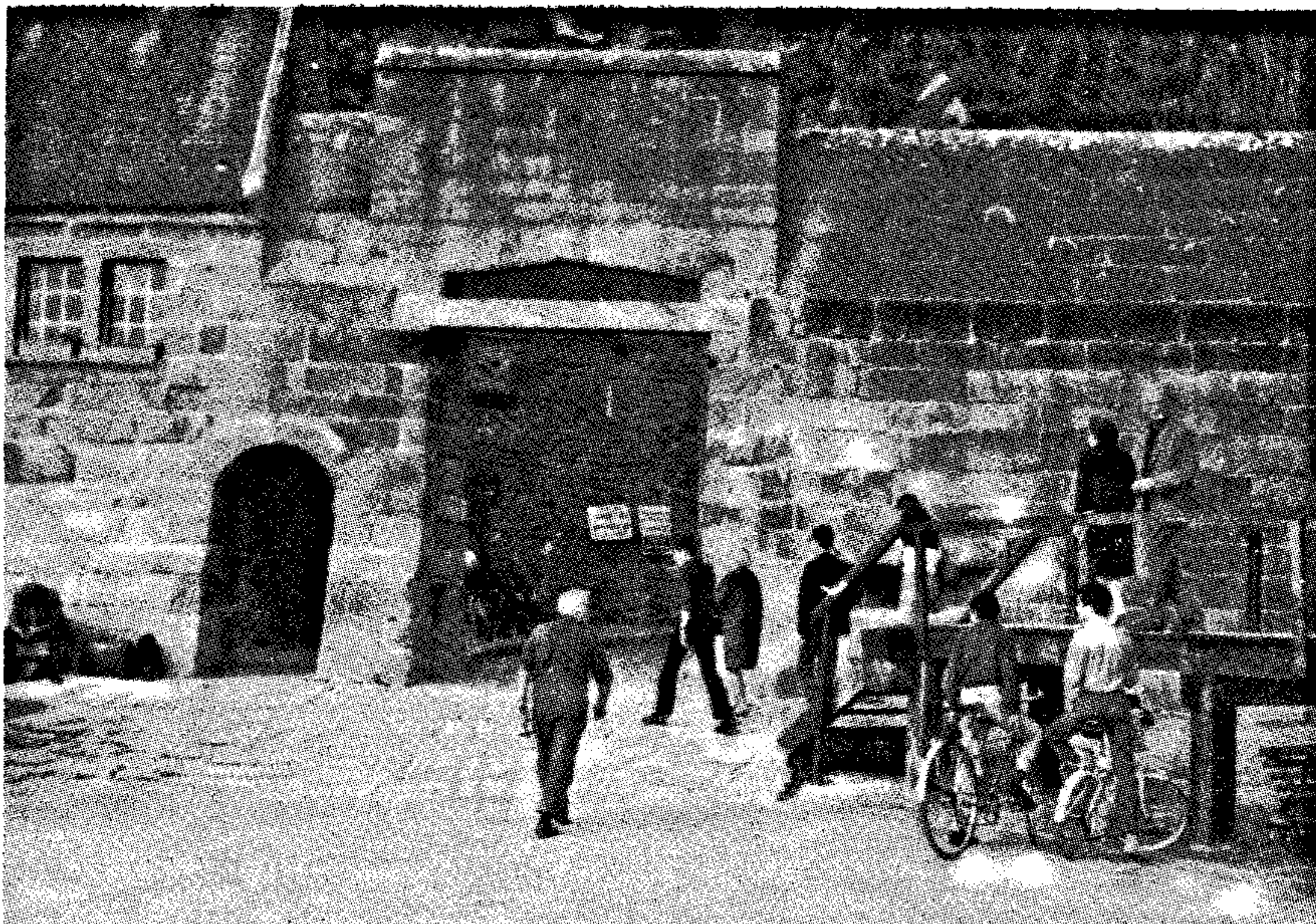


V. Victoria and Diligence approaching Mont-Saint-Michel, about 1900.

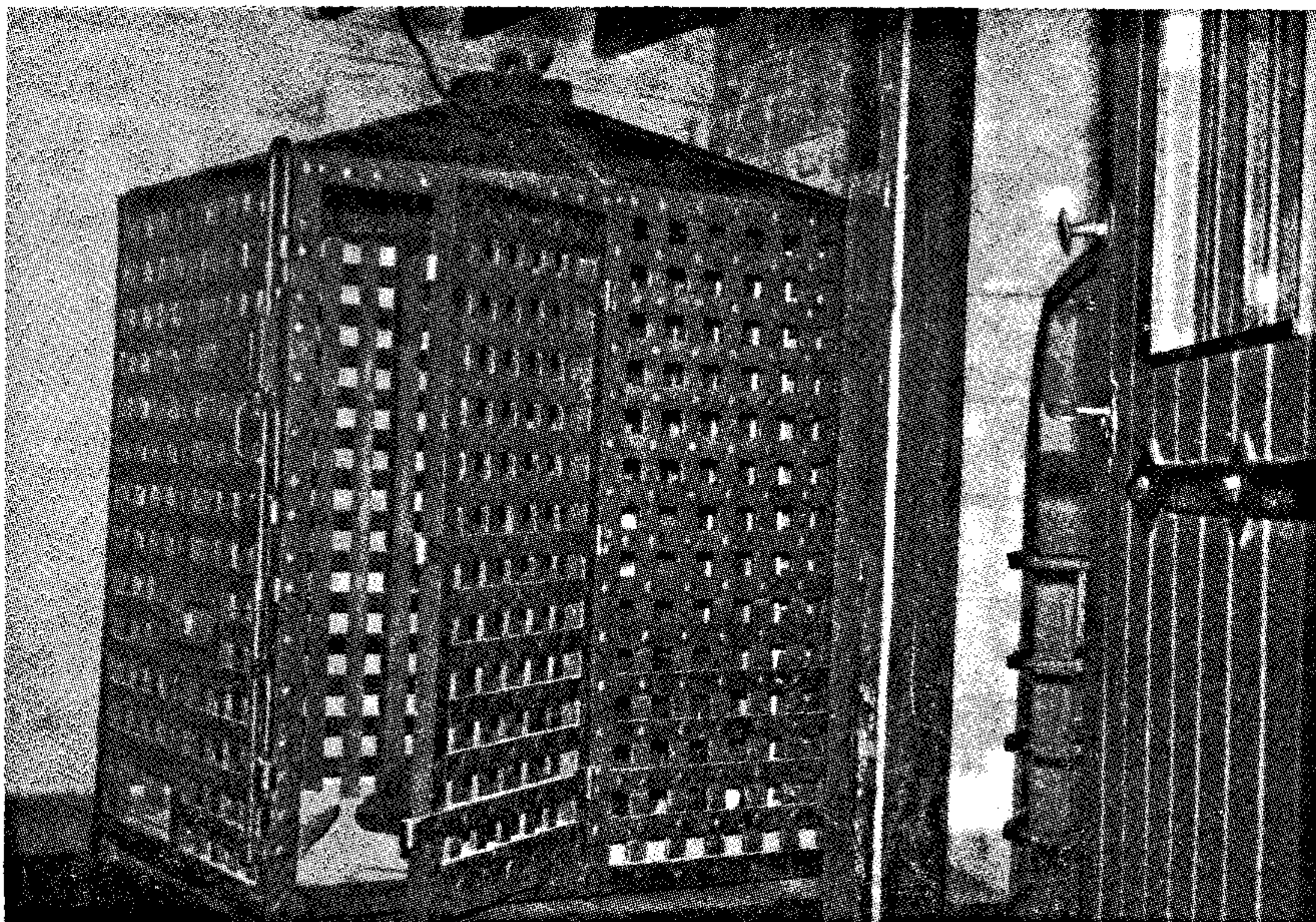


VI. Pilgrims circumambulating Mont-Saint-Michel, at the turn of the century.

Courtesy : Centre Vedantique Ramakrishna, Gretz, France



VII. Mont-Saint-Michel. The old fortified entrance gate.



VIII. Dungeon-cage at the historical museum, Mont-Saint-Michel.

Courtesy : Centre Vedantique Ramakrishna, Gretz, France



IX. Archangel Michael, Parish Church, Mont-Saint-Michel.

Courtesy : Centre Vedantique Ramakrishna, Gretz, France



SISTER NIVEDITA (1867—1911)